

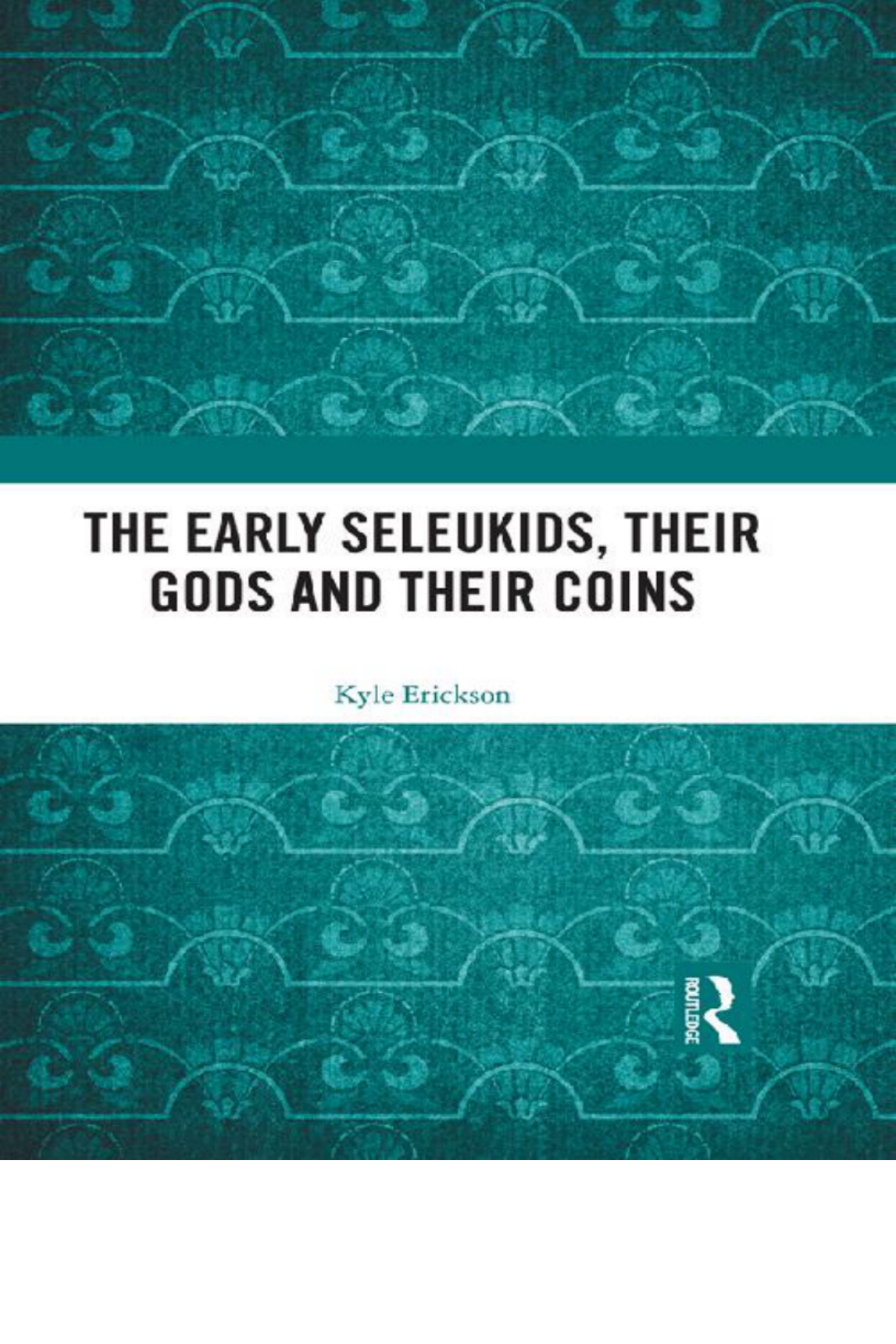
**THE EARLY SELEUKIDS, THEIR
GODS AND THEIR COINS**

Kyle Erickson

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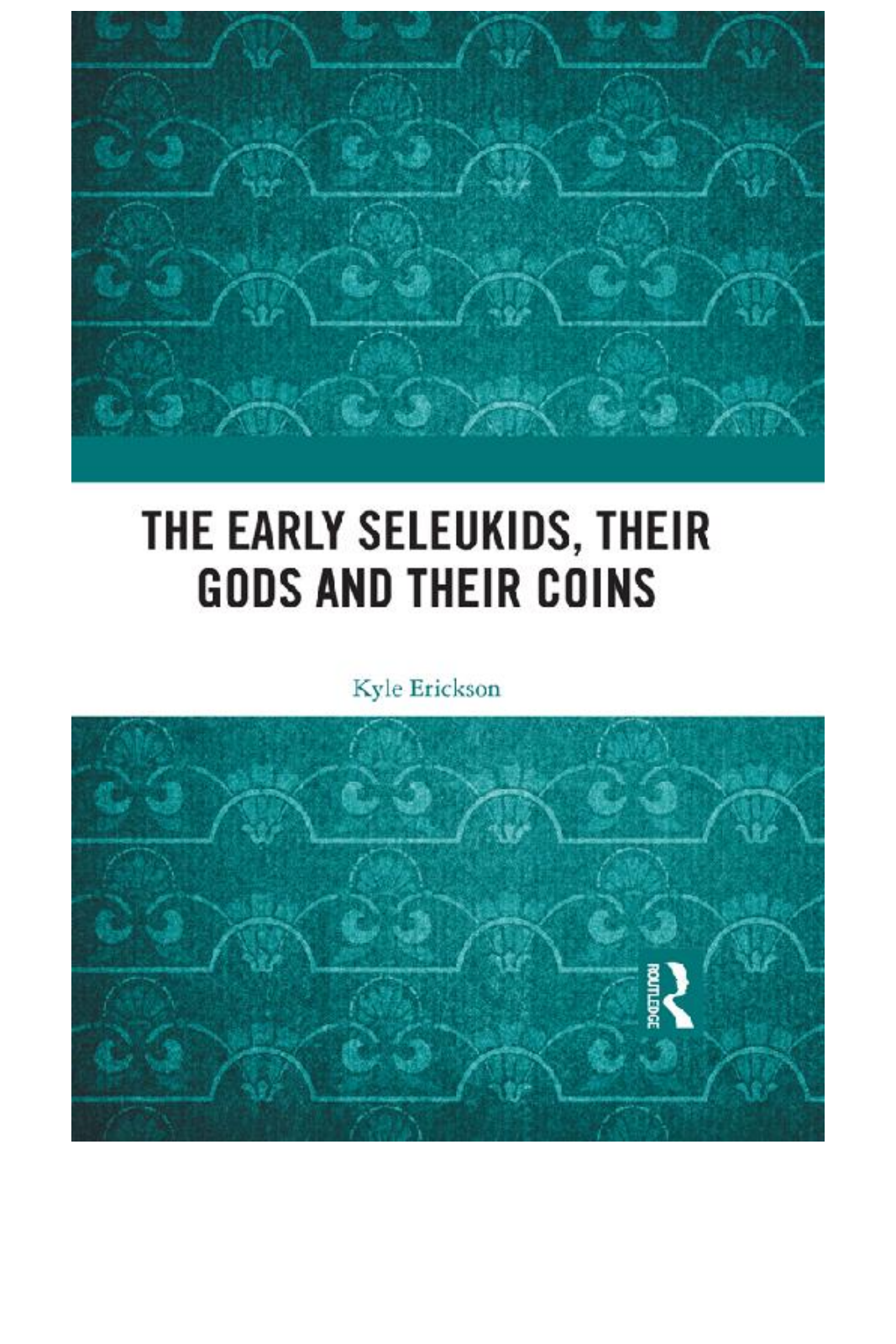


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ROUTLEDGE





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ROUTLEDGE

The Early Seleukids, their Gods and their Coins

Before Alexander, the Near East was ruled by dynasts who could draw on the significant resources and power base of their homeland, but this was not the case for the Seleukids who never controlled their original homeland of Macedon. *The Early Seleukids, their Gods and their Coins* argues that rather than projecting an imperialistic Greek image of rule, the Seleukid kings deliberately produced images that represented their personal power, and that were comprehensible to the majority of their subjects within their own cultural traditions. These images relied heavily on the syncretism between Greek and local gods, in particular their ancestor Apollo.

The Early Seleukids, their Gods and their Coins examines how the Seleukids, from Seleukos I to Antiochos IV, used coinage to propagandise their governing ideology. It offers a valuable resource to students of the Seleukids and of Hellenistic kingship more broadly, numismatics, and the interplay of ancient Greek religion and politics.

Kyle Erickson is the Assistant Dean of Faculty for the Faculty of Humanities and Performing Arts at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, UK. His primary research interest is the political and cultural interactions between the Greek world and the Near East. He is interested in connections between divinity, legitimacy, and power. As a result, his work has concentrated on the numismatic representation of divine figures and their potential multicultural interpretations. His current research explores the iconography of the Seleukid empire, the creation of ruler cult in Asia Minor during the Hellenistic period, problems of Hellenistic kingship. He is also interested in the development of the Alexander legends and the potential existence of a Seleukos romance.

The Early Seleukids, their Gods and their Coins

Kyle Erickson

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A final note on naming conventions. An attempt has been made at consistency in the transliteration of names from non-Latin-based alphabets.

There is not a single convention with regards to studies of the Hellenistic world, but I have followed others, notably John D. Grainger, G.G. Aperghis, John Ma, Nicholas L. Wright, and the Seleukid Study Group, in maintaining the Hellenised rather than Latinised form whenever possible. Therefore, Seleukos rather Seleucus, Koile Syria rather than Coele Syria. This is imperfect and does occasionally cause odd transliterations into English. There are also some notable exceptions for common names: e.g. Alexander for Alexandros, Ptolemy for Ptolemaeus.

*Kyle Erickson
Lampeter, July 2018*

Abbreviations

- FGrH* = Jacoby, Felix: Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker, Leiden Teil II, 1961/83; Teil III, 1950/55.
- I. Magnesia am Sipylus = McCabe, Donald F. *Magnesia Inscriptions. Texts and List*. 'The Princeton Project on the Inscriptions of Anatolia', The Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. Packard Humanities Institute CD #6, 1991.
- I. Erythrai I – II Engelmann, Helmut/Merkelbach, Reinhold: Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai, Teil I (Nr. 1–200); Teil 2 (Nr. 201–536), Bonn 1972/73. (IGSK 1–2)
- I. Iasos I – II = Blümel, Wolfgang: Die Inschriften von Iasos, 2 vols., Bonn 1985.
- I. Ilion = Frisch, Peter: Die Inschriften von Ilion, Bonn 1975. (IGSK 3)
- I. Laodikeia = Corsten, Thomas: Die Inschriften von Laodikeia am Lykos, vol. I: Die Inschriften, Bonn 1997. (IGSK 49)
- I. Milet III = Kawerau, Georg/Rehm, Albert: Das Delphinion in Milet (= Milet. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen seit dem Jahre 1899, Heft III), hg. von Theodor Wiegand. Unter Mitwirkung von Friedrich Freiherr Hiller von Gaertingen, Mark Lidzbarski, Theodor Wiegand, Erich Ziebarth, Berlin 1914.
- I. Priene = FrHr Hiller von Gaertringen, F.: Inschriften von Priene, unter Mitwirkung von C. Fredrich, H. von Prott, H. Schrader, Th. Wiegand, H. Winnefeld, Berlin 1906.
- I. Smyrna = Petzl, G.: Die Inschriften von Smyrna, 3 vols., Bonn 1982–2000. (IGSK 23–24.1–2)
- IK Estremo oriente = Canali De Rossi, Filippo. *Iscrizioni dello estremo oriente greco. Un repertorio*. Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, 65. Bonn 2004.
- OGIS = Dittenberger, W. 1903. *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*. Vol. 1–2. 2 vols. *Supplementum Sylloges Inscriptionum Graecarum*. Leipzig: S. Hirzel (reprinted Hildesheim 1970).

Introduction

On 10 June 323 BC the Macedonian empire was in turmoil as Alexander lay dead and the seeds for the creation of the Seleukid empire were sown in the meetings that ensued. Perdikkas followed Alexander's early promotion of the Macedonian nobleman, Seleukos, to the post of commander of the Royal *Hypaspists* by naming him as his second in command. Despite this position's prominence, it did not come with command over a region, so Seleukos' fate was tied to Perdikkas' success.

When Perdikkas was unable to force his entrance into Egypt, Seleukos, alongside Antigenes and Peithon, seized an opportunity and removed Perdikkas and subsequently struck a new deal with the other rivals. As a result of these negotiations, the potential for the creation of the Seleukid empire first emerged. Seleukos received Babylonia in the satrapal redistribution at Triparadeisos in the following year. During the next five years Seleukos gained considerable support from portions of the Mesopotamian elite and the population at large. But after five years of popular rule, he was driven out of his satrapy by Antigonos. He fled to Ptolemy who gave him a naval command against Antigonos. At the battle of Gaza in 312 Ptolemy further granted him a small cavalry unit and with the help of a favourable Babylonian elite, this small group was able to retake his former satrapy.

Seleukos then turned eastwards against the other satraps. After defeating Nikanor, he campaigned successfully in the East finally returning to Babylon in 311. Antigonos, freed by a peace with Seleukos' allies, sent his son Demetrios to invade that same year. The war continued until 309/308 and ended in a clear victory for Seleukos.

With his satrapy then secure from the rest of the Diadochoi, Seleukos once again turned east; this time to India where he was defeated by the Mauryan king Chandragupta. While he lost the satrapies of Arachosia and Paropamisadae during these excursions, he appears to have gained the support of the other eastern satraps who had previously remained largely aloof from the fighting in the West. Most importantly he secured a large number of war elephants which proved essential in his future successes. With the east of his empire secure and stable, Seleukos reunited with his old coalition of allies – Ptolemy, Kassander, and Lysimachos – to finally defeat Antigonos and

Demetrios. At the battle of Ipsos in 301, this coalition was victorious and Seleukos was the primary beneficiary with his territory now stretching from the Taurus to Sinai. However, Ptolemy, who had not been at the battle, seized Palestine and Phoenicia thus establishing a battleground between the two houses which would last until the end of both dynasties. Seleukos, in order to neutralise the naval threat that Demetrios still posed, married Demetrios' daughter, Stratonike, who he would eventually pass on in marriage to his son. Seleukos spent the following time until 294 organising his territories and founding new cities. In 294, Seleukos captured Kilikia from his father-in-law, Demetrios. But by 286, Demetrios was finally able to briefly retake Kilikia before he was captured by Seleukos and held in honourable captivity until his death two years later.

Seleukos' final military campaign was against his former ally Lysimachos. Struggling with the difficulties of controlling the disparate territories of Macedonia, Thrace, and Asia Minor and a house beset with family difficulties, Lysimachos provided an easy target. At the behest of Lysimachos' daughter-in-law and son, Seleukos launched a full-scale invasion of Asia Minor and defeated Lysimachos at Korupedion (281). Seleukos, however, spent little time attempting to organise this difficult region and left for Europe later that year (or early in the next).

In the same year, Ptolemy Keraunos was able to lure Seleukos away from his troops and murder him leaving the unsettled Seleukid rule in Asia all the more precarious. Nevertheless, Seleukos, who had started his post-Alexander career in an inferior position to the other successors, was the one who, at the end of his long life, came the closest to reunifying Alexander's empire.

At the death of Seleukos, his new empire covered a large portion of the spoils of the Persian empire, stretching, at least nominally, from Thrace to India and to southern Syria. The history of the dynasty until its final collapse at the hands of Pompey in 64 BC has been often seen as one of inexorable decline punctuated with brief periods of resurgence, as Seleukid territory was slowly whittled away by rebellions, defeats, and internal strife. Studies on the nature of Seleukid rule over this vast expanse have generally divided into two camps, although more nuanced views are increasingly popular. On the one hand, there are those who have suggested that the empire was always inherently weak, with limited systems of central control, and functioned largely due to the charisma of the individual kings.¹ As Tarn colourfully asserted, 'The Seleucid empire resembled rather a crustacean, not growing from any solid core but encased in an outer shell ... What actually held the empire together was the personality of the quasi-divine monarch'.² In this view the lack of powerful ruling structures resulted in the fragmentation of the empire when the king was either not present or his charisma was seriously

damaged. Events such as the defection of Molon's army when faced with the so-called real Seleukid king, Antiochos III, reinforced the role of the charismatic power of the Seleukid kings and the paucity of imperial structures. This version of the empire also often assumes the existence of a Greek ruling class that was isolated from the local elites and reliant mainly on the relatively limited Greek manpower that had settled in the new cities of Asia, either by the Seleukids themselves or by Alexander and the other successors.³

In the early 1990s, Sherwin-White and Kuhrt proposed a counter view that saw a strong central government, albeit one still centred on a charismatic king, but which relied heavily on local support particularly in the eastern provinces.⁴ This view incorporated the reassessment of much of the evidence for Seleukid interactions with their subjects in Babylonia, Persia, and Media. Their work and subsequent work on the topic has shown a greater interaction between the Seleukids and their subjects than had been previously recognised. Work in the last 15 years has generally inclined towards this second view of the Seleukid empire and has taken more consideration of the nature of the eastern sources for reconstructing the empire.⁵

Within this scholarly vein, Kosmin's 2014 book paints a vivid picture of a Seleukid empire that consciously defined its own sense of self with determined boundaries: 'the imperial space was invested with symbols of power and memories of kingly heroism, and so became both a source of royal legitimacy and a proving ground for its rulers; its landscape was bounded, measured, and segmented, and thereby made administratively legible at the same time as it was cut with the fault lines along which it would tear'.⁶

My approach in this book attempts to draw the two competing strands together, I follow Chrubasik in assigning significance to a Weberian charismatic king who is the focal point of the empire. However, it also seems apparent that the Seleukids developed an apparatus of state, which, although far less developed than their Ptolemaic contemporaries, aimed to unite the empire. Thus, the book follows a similar vein to that explored by Kosmin's but relies less on bounded territory and the theoretical notions of space on which much of his approach is founded. Rather, I argue that the maintenance of Seleukid power was derived from the successful creation of a Seleukid identity which was neither territorially delimited nor culturally exclusive, but was rather grounded in conceptions of the Seleukid king's right to rule. The right to rule was not only based on an individual king's personal charisma, but was ultimately derived from Seleukos' conquests and was supplemented by the reiteration of divine support for the Seleukid monarch. This book will argue that the Seleukids developed an ideology that was based on a concept of Seleukid power and Seleukid right to rule deriving both from Seleukid military success and the king's personal support from divine powers. This book

attempts to illustrate how the Seleukid kings tried to institutionalise and utilise charismatic kingship into something more than just rule by the king but rather rule by charismatic dynasty and family. This ideology was not fully formed at the outset of the dynasty, but developed throughout the history of the empire, and changed at several key points: the reigns of Seleukos I, Antiochos I, Antiochos III, and Antiochos IV appear to be particularly significant. Even during the reign of a single king significant transformations in the Seleukid ideology could take place. This is most evident in the reigns of certain long-lived kings. For example, during Seleukos I's lifetime this ideology shifted from linking Seleukos' connection with Alexander to establishing a new narrative which justified Seleukos' personal power as discussed in [chapter one](#). During the reign of Antiochos IV there once again appears to be shift in the representation of divine favour in different parts of the empire, the discussion of which closes this book. What is important to recognise is that during each transformation it was not only the representation of the king that shifted, but that at each juncture the Seleukid past was rewritten to accommodate the new reality.

This view of Seleukid ideology in important ways falls closer to how proponents of a 'weak' conception of Seleukid power saw the structures within the empire. However, the view taken here is rather different. The very loose configuration of power structures and unclear lines of organisation that made the system appear weak to scholars in the twentieth century in fact produced a resilient empire that was able to withstand the significant loss of territory (on more than one occasion), rebellion, usurpers, and attacks for nearly two centuries. It was not until all of these forces were turned completely inward at a time when the empire lacked a powerful monarch who could monopolise dynastic charisma that the empire finally collapsed.

Seleukid ideology and culture

Related to the competing ideas of a weak or strong Seleukid empire have been the discussions on the nature of Seleukid culture. Was the Seleukid empire a Macedonian (and to a lesser extent Greek) imposition on the Near East or was it basically a continuation of the Achaemenid empire?⁷ By the mid-1990s it became generally accepted that the Seleukids had a unique and distinctive place in the history of the Near East.⁸ More recent studies have shown the Seleukids deriving their administrative models from both the Near East and Greece as well as developing their own. Further distinction from the

Achaemenid model has been demonstrated with studies that argue that the Seleukids looked back to earlier Near Eastern empires, particularly in Babylon for models of interacting with local elites.⁹ What is becoming increasingly clear is that the Seleukid empire was neither a Persian empire in Macedonian guise nor a Macedonian empire in Babylonian dress, but rather was a distinctive cultural entity that influenced those empires that came after it. I concur with the view which Strootman suggests: ‘we view the imperial culture of the Ptolemaic and Seleukid empires as respectively “Ptolemaic” and “Seleukid”, in the same manner that scholars also speak of, say, Ottoman culture without their being required to evaluate at all times the Ottoman monarchy’s multifarious cultural antecedents’.¹⁰

This Seleukid culture did derive from the large range of cultural interactions within the empire, but was not simply a sum of the constituent parts. In terms of architecture, new styles developed that combined original elements with older Near Eastern models.¹¹ The Seleukids themselves underwent a transformation from successors to Alexander to a dynasty in their own right. The recognition of Seleukos as a dynastic figurehead was assisted by the creation and dissemination of legendary stories about the king and his immediate family, much like similar legends that grew up around Alexander.¹² These stories combined elements from tales about Persian, Babylonian, and Greek heroes, gods, and kings. The development of this royal ideology took place against the background of an increasingly Hellenised elite. Despite the extensive engagement with local elites and their cultural world, the Seleukid court also continued to adopt Greek practices. Greek culture remained important as shown by the theatres, gymnasiums, and other ‘Greek’ public buildings built across the Seleukid realm, for example in Ai Khanoum, Babylon, and Jerusalem.¹³ Further, many of these theatrical elements were adopted by their successors in the East; for example, the performance of Euripides *Bacchae* in which the Roman general Crassus’ head was used for that of Pentheus as within normal Parthian court practice (despite the extraordinary prop).¹⁴

In the creation of a ‘Seleukid’ cultural identity, I argue that the Seleukid court cannily adopted an iconography and ideology that espoused the power of the Seleukid king through his connection to the Greek god Apollo¹⁵ but at the same time could be reinterpreted by elites throughout the empire in ways that made sense within a pre-existing local context. The only requirement of loyalty to the dynasty was the adoption of the distinctive ‘Seleukid’ imagery and an acceptance of Seleukid power. As noted by Kertzer, the king required solidarity of action (the replication of imperial iconography) but not solidarity of thought (the understanding of this iconography).¹⁶

Legitimacy

In states without institutionalised processes for transferring power, a wide variety of options are available to establish the status of the new elite as rightful rulers. In cases where the new power has overthrown the establishment, as was the situation with the successors to Alexander, several particular options are available. The old power structure can be presented as illegitimate in an effort to reduce its status, an older power structure can be revived to the status of a golden age which has now returned, or the new rulers can claim a new mandate to rule based on other factors. None of these possibilities are mutually exclusive, nor does employing any of these methods require that they match the reality on the ground. For example, the removal of the 'Persian yoke' from Egypt by Alexander in real terms did not require a wholesale dismantling of the prior system of rule or the complete removal of all of the major political players. Thus, performance does not need to match reality, it only has to serve to create the perception of change and elevate the status of the new ruling elite.

The approach taken in this book has been greatly influenced by discussions on the nature of pre-modern empires tracing back to Mann's (1986) discussion.¹⁷ In this approach, the key source of imperial power is not direct rule through a rigid organisational structure, but one created through constant negotiation of power dynamics by a changing group of internal and external elites.¹⁸ In the case of the Seleukid dynasty, this required the repeated recreation of Seleukid legitimacy in order to retain the bonds created by the king throughout the empire. The empire, of course, should be considered a hegemonic empire,¹⁹ drawing its ultimate authority from military superiority (or at least the impression thereof) with the chief aim of extracting tribute. For the Seleukids and their large land-based empire, the exercise of negotiating the power balance required the king or his representatives regularly to appear throughout the empire and be accessible to the local elites. This created the need for the king and his court to actively interact within the paradigms of the local elite, whether they were Greek, Babylonian, Jewish, or Persian.

Therefore, one of the first tasks for Seleukos I was to establish his legitimacy as sovereign. For the Seleukid kings following Antiochos I, the legitimatisation process required creating a reaffirmation of the family's right to rule. This continuity of familiar power did not prevent challenges to the king's rule, but granted the king a type and degree of power that was unavailable to outsiders. This did not relieve the king of his need to establish his own personal power, but gave him a background on which he could draw. This need is best expressed by Polybios (5.83) in his summary of the speeches given by Ptolemy

and Antiochos before the battle of Raphia in 217:

The substance of what was said on both sides was the same: for neither monarch had any glorious or famous achievement of his own to quote to those whom he was addressing, seeing that they had but recently succeeded to their crowns; but they endeavoured to inspire the men of the phalanx with spirit and boldness, by reminding them of the glory of their ancestors, and the great deeds performed by them.

Polybios 5.83 (translation Shuckburgh 1889)²⁰

This harkening back to their ancestors allowed the kings to place themselves in a long and successful line of monarchs. However, they had neither conquered the kingdom for themselves, nor were their fathers so secure in their rule that usurpation was inconceivable.²¹ The successful kings adopted different strategies to ensure that their house continued to rule. Seleukos I ingeniously solved the problem by transferring his wife to his son and bestowing on him the title of king. While the passing of his wife to his son may have been useful in establishing legitimacy through the process similar to levirate marriage, other forms of establishing legitimacy were also needed.²² Two of the forms that this process took were closely related to the god Apollo: the first was the development of the story of a Seleukid descent from the god; the second was the development and use of the regional connections that could be exploited by the syncretistic tendencies of Apollo and the iconographic possibilities of the Apollo-on-the-omphalos image. The goal of this propaganda effort was to convince the peoples of both the inevitable power of the Seleukid rulers and of the divine forces who favoured and legitimised them. This practice was not exclusive to Antiochos and was replicated by his descendants who maintained and expanded this connection, eventually drawing the deceased members of the house into the divine sphere.

Propaganda

Throughout the book I use the word ‘propaganda’. Despite the anachronistic nature of this term, it is quite useful to explain the dissemination and repetition of the idea of a Seleukid kingdom. It is used to draw attention to the mechanisms through which Antiochos and his father worked to craft an image of the Seleukid dynasty that functioned on an ideological as well as practical level and served to reinforce their power. I am fully aware that the term can be open to a problematic backward reading of modern cultural stereotypes onto the ancient world, but believe that the use of the term opens a wider range of interpretations that help us understand the development and maintenance of

Seleukid power. One facet of the problems in applying ‘propaganda’ is its modern sense which has resulted from the development of propaganda and public relations as a distinct discipline for the manipulation of material since Bernays first published his book *Propaganda* in 1928.²³ As a result of the successful use of mass messages by all sides during the wars of the first half of the twentieth century, which were continued for several decades during the Cold War, the term is now used almost entirely in the negative sense of biased, misleading and manipulative messages sent out by governments through mass media to influence their populations. As a result, it was regarded as problematic to apply the term to pre-Napoleonic history, and even more so to the ancient world, given the lack of an equivalent mechanism for distributing the views of the elite.

However, in the present study, the meaning of the term has been narrowed to merely denote the dissemination of political ideology by a variety of mechanisms, with the aim of reaching all the local elites and potentially even every single subject without excluding a further targeted audience beyond the geographical boundaries of the empire.²⁴ The range of mechanisms for this type of propaganda can be expanded from literary texts and images to include a wide range of interactions, featuring both vertical and horizontal integration, with the aim of creating a new ideology addressed to a variety of different audiences such as the individual inhabitants, the cities, the army, the client rulers, the neighbours, etc. The Hellenistic kings in general and the Seleukids, in particular, did not attempt to transform the ideologies and beliefs of their subjects, but rather used what I have termed ‘propaganda’ to more closely align themselves with existing beliefs, customs and ideologies of rule in order to reintroduce the notion of their rule.

In dealing with Seleukid propaganda there are two separate factors that need to be discussed. The first is the means by which this propaganda was circulated. It is only possible to gain access to a small sample of what must have been originally produced, as it would have included not only material culture but also festivals, processions, and the physical appearance of the king, or other ceremonial activities. Some of this can be reconstructed through the literary accounts, but much of it is inevitably lost.²⁵ What we can access is some of the material remains of the empire, which includes the coinage, decrees published across the empire, and archaeological remains. The message which was aimed at the various populations of the empire is equally if not more difficult to reconstruct. None of the Hellenistic treatises on kingship which would have helped identify the important aspects of Hellenistic kingship survive, nor as noted do many of the manifestations of their propaganda. This book attempts to reconstruct what the message could have been through the means through which it was presented. This task is

necessarily fraught with considerable difficulty and precludes any firm judgements on what was actually meant. Instead, I will look to explain possible meanings and how they could have been interpreted based on what can be reconstructed.

The most obvious manifestation of the Hellenistic kings' self-promotion is the development of divine epithets, particularly those which promoted civic benefactions or were markers of success, Victor (*Nikator*), Saviour (*Soter*), or Benefactor (*Euregetes*) which gives us a useful insight into the values the kings wished to promote about themselves.²⁶ Additionally, it seems clear from the evidence discussed throughout this book that near the beginning of each of the new dynasties, a significant effort was placed in creating a framework which emphasised each king's right to rule and his right to pass this power onto his children.²⁷ A framework can be built around concepts that appear to be important, such as spear-won land, but even this is difficult as claims could be contested even after territory had been lost.

This, however, was not enough and further strategies were developed. Two are of particular interest: one important strategy was to demonstrate, through coinage, art, and even poetry, that the new king was linked either to their predecessor Alexander or to the gods themselves. For the Seleukids, as [chapter one](#) argues began with a focus on Zeus and Alexander as supporters of Seleukos. By the reign of Antiochos I, a shift occurred and a familial link to Apollo began to be promoted. Rather than simply a promotion of Antiochos' credentials as a Greek king, I argue that the Seleukid linkage to Apollo could be and was understood as an association with an important local deity across wide swaths of the empire. At the same time, the early Seleukids seemed also willing to respect the religious beliefs of their Babylonian, Iranian, Syrian, and Greek subjects.

The development of this new legitimising image for the kings also included their families as dynastic heritage became particularly important. This granted further significance to wives, mothers, and daughters whose very bloodlines defined their roles within the family and the empire, allowing them to help secure the rule of the king. It is for their usefulness in legitimising the dynasty that the first generation of Seleukid royal women became so important. Antiochos' mother, Apama, as the only bride from Alexander's mass weddings known to produce a royal heir, played a significant role in establishing her husband's and her son's power in her home territory of Sogdiana. Antiochos' step-mother and wife, Stratonike, also had an equally prominent background from which to draw local support within the empire.²⁸

The Seleukid court

One of the main groups that would have been active in creating and simultaneously influenced by Seleukid propaganda would have been the court. The Seleukid kings, like all other Macedonian monarchs, presented themselves as absolutist monarchs with hereditary claims to any territory once held by members of their family.²⁹ In actual fact, the Seleukid kings were one part of what became an increasingly elaborate court system, which inherited structures and titles from both the courts of Philip and Alexander and the Persian empire.³⁰ These were further enhanced by developments within the period itself. The Seleukid court at the most basic level consisted of the king and his household. The general conception of the empire as the property or household of the king (*ta pragmata* – interests) is also reflected in the language used to discuss the court, e.g. *oikos*; *aule*; etc. In reality however, the court included far more than the king and his family and comprised an ever-variable group, including the families of various wives, king's *philoi*, delegates from various cities and groups both from inside and outside the empire, foreign dignitaries, and religious officials to name but a few.³¹ Loyalty among this group was of primary importance for the Seleukid kings as to a large extent their power rested on this group's acceptance of the current Seleukid king as overlord.

The innermost circle of this group consisted of the king's friends, his *philoi*. The institution of royal *philoi* as part of the Seleukid court structure grew out of old *hetairoi* of the Macedonian court and the new *philoi* created during Alexander's campaigns. These men were not necessarily restricted to the hereditary aristocracy, as its membership was defined by those men who were held in the king's favour. These men were often drawn from the system of royal pages, which over time became more closely tied with the aristocracy, but could also be drawn from anywhere, inside or outside the empire. As Strootman notes: 'out of a total of 41 friends whose place of origin has been recorded by Polybios and Livy, more than 50 percent came from cities outside the actual Seleukid sphere of influence'.³² For the most part these men were either Greek/Macedonian or part of a Hellenising local elite. The number of non-Greeks within these groups is often impossible to determine, in part because simple attempts to calculate their frequency by the number of non-Greek names is impossible given that at least to some extent local elites took Greek names.³³ I will argue that while there was a significant presence of non-Greeks at the court, the court was extremely Hellenised in outward appearance, even if their propaganda could have had an acceptable local interpretation.

The Hellenisation of the court had an important impact on the presentation of Seleukid propaganda. It appears to be significant that the 'official' image of the Seleukids as we can determine from coinage was at least superficially Greek.³⁴ While I contend that these images can be interpreted in a polyvalent context with a shifting meaning depending on local circumstances, it remained significant that the overarching symbolism was originally drawn from a Greek context. Thus, iconography functioned in the same way as the prominent individuals at the court, within a court context they needed to be seen within a Hellenised context, whereas in other contexts these individuals could continue to adopt their own local practices. As I argue in [chapter two](#), the polyvalent nature of the Seleukid image of Apollo on the omphalos is most clearly evident in the East where the Parthians adopt this image but reinterpret it as the image of the king rather than as a god. It seems most likely that this is not a Parthian adaptation of the image, but rather this was a longstanding local understanding of the image as that of the Greek king. As such for the Greek audience, the image of Apollo always remains an image of Apollo, but for the elite who adopt the image could develop a different connotation.

Mechanisms of Seleukid propaganda

Coinage

The authority to produce coinage was under control of the king and coins had obvious value and circulation within the elites, military, and merchant classes.³⁵ Therefore the imagery they bore offered a useful mechanism to promulgate the propaganda messages of the dynasty.³⁶ One of the most prevalent images of Seleukid royal authority was the image of Apollo seated on the omphalos that first appeared on Seleukid coinage during the reign of Antiochos I. This image appears to have become a representative emblem for the dynasty. The repetition of this coin type became a powerful symbol of Seleukid authority and the status of the ruler as a Seleukid king. In exploring this coin type and other parts of the Seleukid numismatic repertoire we can gain an insight into the overarching expression of what it meant to be part of the Seleukid kingdom.

There are several important questions that must be answered when arguing that the iconography of coinage was a major form of propaganda to express the ideology of the empire. The first is: where did the iconography originate

and was it royally mandated? The second is: how were the coins disseminated and to whom? Thirdly: how did the audience which handled these coins react to the images on them or were they even aware of the messages they contained? The final question and main subject of this book is: why were these particular types minted and how did they serve to promote the evolving ideology of the Seleukid kings?

Who controlled the images on coins?

On the most basic level, the coins were produced at local mints which were under the control of a mint official. The mint marks on Seleukid coins often appear to be related to the initials of individuals, most likely the mint official, although to date no study of these individuals has yet been undertaken. Aperghis has suggested that the mints of any given satrapy were under the control of the *dioikētēs* (a royal official and the financial counterpart of the *stratēgos*/ satrap).³⁷ The individual dies would have been cut by craftsmen, who were either brought to the mint with the minting official or by a local artisan. It is highly doubtful that the impetus for the overall design of the coin rested with the individual craftsmen at a local level given the general coordination between coin types across the entire empire. Nevertheless, the individualised features of any particular die may have depended on the skill of the craftsman and his desire to produce an individualised type. This same argument may also be applied to the individual mint officials, although they may be responsible for the inclusion of particular long-lasting variations at a single mint or a repeated design at various mints during their career. Our understanding of the inner workings of the Hellenistic mints is extremely limited.

In addition, the responsibilities for the creation of a particular type may have varied, depending on the value of the coin, the location of the mint, and the obverse and reverse sides of the coin. As bronze coinage had a more limited circulation and significantly less value, the minting authority may have had more leeway in the creation of types for it. Nevertheless, the control of the local mint officials in determining the imagery was limited. In order to ensure a general consistency and acceptability of the currency across the empire, the Seleukids may have circulated sets of written instructions, drawings, sample coins, and/or portraits. These would have included the images to be used on each side of the coin, a model for the portrait, and the reverse image and the relevant features (diadems, horns, laurel crowns, etc.) to be included.³⁸

Inspiration for variations within the design may also have been drawn either at the central level or the local level from statues or portraits. While we have no direct evidence for how Seleukid coins were designed, this system would account for the generally widespread similarity of coin types and also explain variation at individual mints.

This system, as with all systems in the Seleukid empire, would have depended on the active participation of the magistrate in charge.³⁹ Thus as individual magistrates began to assert their independence from the kingdom they had an increasing level of control over the coin types. One of the best examples of this process occurred in Baktria. In the first assertion of independence, the Seleukid reverse type was replaced by a standing Zeus, while the legend and obverse portrait of the Seleukid king were maintained. But as the Diodotid kings were able to use their control over the province to move towards complete independence without interference from the central authority, both the legend and the obverse portrait were replaced.⁴⁰ This gradual change suggests that the Seleukids were willing to tolerate a great deal of independence from their satraps. However, their tolerance in this instance may be overstated on account of the particular situation in Baktria and Antiochos II's (and subsequently Seleukos II's) inability to intervene in Baktrian affairs. What the changes in Baktria do demonstrate is that the Seleukid type had already become strongly associated with the dynasty by the reign of Antiochos II (only having been introduced by his father), and the Baktrian dynasts felt the need to assert their own independence by a complete change in local deities.⁴¹ This suggests that the impetus for the Apollo-type coinage in particular originated at the central court.

Another important consideration for determining who issued the coinage was the legend. Almost all Seleukid coinage in this period has the legend 'Of King ____'. In almost all cases this represents the reigning king. However, a problem arises with this simple formula owing to the particular structure of Seleukid kingship. Beginning during the reign of Seleukos I, a second king was normally appointed to rule over the eastern half of the empire. The duties and authority of these sub-rulers appeared to depend on their age and personal ambition. While these kings may have had a part in the development of coin types in the regions under their control, the legend still normally only referred to the king who had appointed them. This situation appears to be fairly fluid under Seleukos I and Antiochos I's co-reigns but the dominance of the senior figure is more clearly established for the rest of the dynasty. I follow the practice of assigning all coinage to the named (senior) monarch, unless the junior monarch can be shown to have been active in the area in which the coinage was issued.

On the whole, the iconography for Seleukid royal coinage appears to reflect

some central planning at the royal court. Furthermore, the adoption of particular coin types appears to match other types of dynastic self-presentation beyond just coinage. In particular, the appearance of Apollo on coinage corresponded to an increased emphasis on Apollo and the choice of this god as the progenitor of the Seleukid royal house.⁴²

How were coins disseminated?

The second question, how coins were produced and disseminated in the Seleukid empire, has important ramifications for the study of iconography. While a discussion of the Seleukid financial system is outside the scope of this book,⁴³ there are still two major factors to take into account when discussing Seleukid coinage, their open monetary system and their two-tier value system.

In the period currently under discussion (the reigns of Seleukos I to Antiochos IV, broadly the third century BC) the Seleukids appear to have had an open monetary system in which any coinage on the Attic weight standard was free to circulate.⁴⁴ This had two very significant consequences. First, the very large number of tetradrachms produced for Alexander and some of his successors (particularly Lysimachos) continued to circulate especially in Asia Minor.⁴⁵ Many of these Alexander coins or Lysimachos coins were posthumously issued either by official Seleukid mints or by other cities. The situation was reversed in the eastern part of the empire where large numbers of these coins did not circulate, and the bulk of production was made up by Seleukid coinage.⁴⁶ The introduction and wide circulation of Seleukid coins in the East may have created the need for an image that could be suitably interpreted as a statement of Seleukid power in the eastern empire. Two eastern interpretations of Seleukid symbolism will be discussed below: the connection between Apollo and Nabû and Apollo and the royal archer.

The second consequence is that unlike in the closed Ptolemaic monetary system⁴⁷ Seleukid coinage was forced to compete in an open market, thus the physical value of the coin (weight and purity) must have been at a comparable standard while the iconography must also have been distinctive enough to suggest Seleukid power to the user. After the reign of Seleukos I, individual Seleukid kings produced an increasingly smaller amount of silver coinage. This may have been due to the amount of silver available for minting or the fact that the earlier coinage that remained in circulation was still largely meeting the needs of the population. However, with the numerous military campaigns undertaken by Antiochos III, this trend was reversed as he produced more

coinage than any previous king apart from Seleukos I.⁴⁸

Under the first Seleukid kings, the state appears to have had a two-tier monetary system which split the currency into high-value coinage (gold and silver) and low-value token coins (bronze). The high-value Seleukid coinage consisted largely of silver tetradrachms which were too valuable to be used in everyday transactions at a local level. Aperghis has estimated that a silver Attic tetradrachm could purchase five and half months' supply of barley in Babylon for a single man.⁴⁹ This strongly suggests that the silver and gold coinage was of too great a value to have been produced for common local transactions and must have had a different purpose. Nevertheless, silver tetradrachms represent about 78 percent of the total value of Seleukid monetary production in this period.⁵⁰ Therefore, Aperghis must be correct when he asserts that the tetradrachm was the primary means of economic exchange between the state and its subjects.⁵¹ This greatly increases the likelihood that silver tetradrachms produced by the state were the primary means of disseminating royal propaganda. The even higher value of gold coinage suggests that it was only used for very large transactions or for interstate trade, primarily with India.⁵² The other major reason for production of gold coins was for a special prestige issue, more often than not associated with a military campaign or the arrival of the king into a satrapy or city.⁵³ For these reasons, their broad circulation, their high value, and their use as the major form of state expenditure, high-value coins provide the most useful vehicle for analysing Seleukid ideology as expressed through coinage.

At the other end of the spectrum,⁵⁴ Seleukid royal bronzes were largely a token coinage⁵⁵ with a limited local circulation. This coinage would have functioned as the everyday currency for most of the inhabitants of the empire. While the gold and silver coins of the Seleukids were traded at a value equal to the metal they contained, the bronze coins carried a premium. The overvaluation of bronze coins relative to the intrinsic value of their metal and hence the potential for profit in their production may have been one of the reasons why the Seleukids and other Hellenistic dynasties were reluctant to allow cities under their suzerainty to mint bronze coinage.⁵⁶ It is the geographically limited circulation of bronze coinage which makes them particularly interesting in terms of Seleukid iconography and ideology. As these coins were less likely to circulate across large geographical areas, they may reflect local peculiarities more explicitly than higher-value coinage. However, most of the Seleukid royal bronze currency shows a strong tendency to display the same dynastic themes as silver currency. As these coins were also produced in sizes smaller than tetradrachms, they had to use more compressed imagery in order to portray the same message. In these instances, a particular feature, the bow or the cithara of Apollo for example, may stand in

for Apollo but they also serve to emphasise particular attributes of the overall iconography. A further important feature of the local nature of this coinage is that it repeated and transformed the symbols of high-value coinage in order to emphasise dynastic continuity as symbols from Seleukos I were combined with those of his son to produce a new image. The innovation of these types may be linked to their value and limited circulation, whereas the generally conservative nature of the high-value coinage may be linked to its economic function as an exchange currency.

Reactions to coins

This question is in some ways the most difficult to answer as we have little direct evidence for individual reactions to coin types in the Seleukid era, so we are required to look at indirect evidence. In those cases where we do have ancient discussions of Seleukid coins, it tends to be in the context of payments, and in these cases the coins are usually referred to by weight not by particular type. For example, the treaty of Apamea, which the Romans imposed on Antiochos III after his defeat at Magnesia, stipulated that the indemnity be paid in talents of a particular weight standard.⁵⁷ This tells us little about how individuals reacted to different coinage types or how foreign governments responded, as the main concern appears to be weight and purity (intrinsic value). Perhaps the best way to assess the reaction without direct evidence is through the change in coin types at the start of new regimes. If the imagery provoked no reactions, why change it? In fact, there are good reasons not to, the continuity of coinage imagery would have helped promote the acceptance of coinage and contributed to the economic stability of the monetary system.⁵⁸ But, as shown below, during the reigns of Seleukos I, Antiochos I, and Seleukos II the iconography was changed, undoubtedly because of a desire to demonstrate a new conception of authority. In the periods of stable rule after the establishment of a dynastic type the use of similar iconography emphasised the continuation of authority (even when it had been usurped). While the general population may not have had a great interest in what appeared on the coinage they used, the group of individuals who created the types and who oversaw their production were keenly aware of the potential of coinage to convey a message. Therefore, what I believe we can learn from a study of the coinage is not how an individual reacted to a particular type, but rather the message(s) which the minting authority hoped to express.

Choice of coin images

The final question of why particular coin types were chosen forms one of the crucial questions of this book. Each of the following chapters discusses the types of coinage issued by individual kings and suggests the ideological connotations of the type. But first a few preliminary words must be said on the motivation of the Seleukid dynasty in creating coin types. The production and regulation of a particular type of coinage at first seems slightly incongruous with the open monetary policy of the Seleukids. The continued production of Alexander tetradrachms would have fulfilled the economic functions of coinage for trade and commerce. Therefore, we must examine the potential propaganda value of dynasty-specific coin types. On the most fundamental level, coinage physically delivered a political and ideological message to whoever handled it. Furthermore, as this message was delivered almost entirely through images it would have been accessible to a wider audience than any written work. During the period under consideration, the only inscriptions which appeared on Seleukid coinage were 'of King _____' with the sole exception of the Antiochos *Soter* coinage which reads 'of Antiochos the Saviour'. These very limited legends may undermine Zahle's contention that the coinage was aimed solely at the Graeco-Macedonians as the legend was kept on coinage by the non-Greek successors to the Seleukids (the Parthians) even when not dealing with a specifically Greek-speaking audience. Furthermore in this period, the legend adds little iconographic significance or a separate message to the coinage and serves only as an identifying marker.⁵⁹ The distinctive iconography of the Seleukid kings, in particular the repeated image of Apollo-on-the-omphalos, may have rendered the inscription redundant to most of the users. Just as the image of George Washington on the American quarter or the Queen on the English pound are easily identifiable without reading the inscription.

This brings us to a second important consideration and this is the creation of a long-lasting and largely consistent iconography for the dynasty. The creation of the Seleukid type of Apollo-on-the-omphalos by Antiochos I and its adoption by Antiochos II marked an important point in Seleukid ideology.⁶⁰ With the establishment of an overarching consistent iconography of Seleukid rule, the use of this particular coin type may have implied that the issuer was the legitimate Seleukid monarch without any other external indicators.⁶¹ The continuation of the Apollo-on-the-omphalos reverse type served the same ideological function as the creation and continuation of the Seleukid era, the insistence on dynastic continuity.

A further reason for the importance of coinage as a vehicle for political and

ideological messages was their widespread use. Coinage was more likely to be viewed by any given individual than either a statue or an inscription, or especially the king himself, who would rarely be seen by an individual citizen. In the absence of other forms of media for propaganda, it provided the ideal medium with which to deliver a message to the general population. For this reason, the development of individual portraiture on the obverse was one of the most significant developments of the Hellenistic periods. Antiochos I was the first Seleukid king to place his own portrait on coins and he was followed in this by all of his successors. The similarities between the portraits of individual kings may have helped imply dynastic continuity. On the other hand, increasingly idealised portraits may reflect either fashions at the court, the mint, or may have deeper symbolic meaning even implying the divinity of a deceased king. Here the Ptolemaic practice of maintaining the portrait of Ptolemy I across a range of coinage until the end of the dynasty provides a marked contrast to the Seleukid practice.⁶² For the Ptolemaic kings, continuity and dynastic legitimacy was expressed through explicit reference to the founder of the dynasty, whose name each male king shared. Therefore, although the function of coinage was primarily economic, there is a large amount of significant information we can draw from examining the symbolic importance of coinage.

Modern study of coinage

To help us understand the iconography of Seleukid coinage, a brief discussion of ancient minting techniques and modern analysis is also necessary. All coins produced in the Seleukid empire were struck by hand. In order to strike coins, two dies were carved: an obverse and a reverse die. A large number of blank coin flans was also produced. In order to strike a coin, the obverse die was set in an anvil; the flan was set atop it. The reverse die set in a punch was positioned on the flan. This unit was then struck with a hammer, forcing the designs onto the flan.⁶³ This process gives modern numismatists a variety of methods to help date the coins. The first is through die studies. Die studies rely on a result of the minting process: the obverse die lasted much longer than the reverse die. Thus a single obverse die could be used with numerous reverse dies, creating an overlap between the use of obverse and reverse dies. When a significant number of coins are available for study, a linked series can be created. The relative chronology of this linked series can be used to establish an absolute chronology if a fixed point can be found for one or more coins in

the series.⁶⁴ One other feature that can help identify the date of coinage is the use of a civic or royal era on the coinage. However, Seleukid coinage of the period under discussion lacks this feature.

Other useful information from the minting process includes the die adjustment. When setting the reverse die on top of flan it can be placed in any number of positions. The positioning of adjusted dies (a large number of coins with the reverses positioned in the same way) can give some information on the region in which the coinage was produced if you make the reasonable assumption that each mint would adhere to its specific practice of adjustment.

Other important factors aid in the assignment of coinage to a particular mint. The most useful and significant of these are mint marks. Often coinage was produced with an image or set of images which can help to identify the mint at which the coinage was produced. These images are separate from the distinctive iconographic features of the main type and are not discussed as part of Seleukid iconography in this work. However, much of the information on the provenance of the coinage used here comes from the analysis of mint marks.

In the 1940s, Newell's pioneering work created the basic framework for discussions of the provenance and chronology of Seleukid coinage.⁶⁵ Recently, Newell's work has been re-examined and updated by Houghton and Lorber, and this has resulted in a new comprehensive catalogue of Seleukid coinage.⁶⁶ These studies and individual mint studies have provided the background for my iconographic analysis.

Literary and epigraphic sources

Along with numismatics this book also uses literary sources and epigraphic evidence to explain the development of a Seleukid royal ideology that stressed the royal house's descent from Apollo and emphasised its own legitimacy. But while we have coinage produced by every Seleukid king, the literary and epigraphic record is more sporadic. The most complete narrative literary account of the Seleukid empire comes from the last nineteen sections of Appian's *Syrian Wars*, which contains a brief summary of the dynasty appended to an account of Rome's war with Antiochos III.⁶⁷ This account is highly selective and was written nearly two centuries after the death of the last Seleukid king. For the second most complete summary of Seleukid history, we must turn to Justin's epitome of Pompeius Trogus. This summary of the Augustan historian is difficult to evaluate given its nature as a summary and the lack of the original text. For the first years after Alexander the accounts of

Diodoros are the most complete. However, they are focused mainly on the wars between Eumenes and Antigonos in the West, and we lack a detailed narrative of Seleukos' campaigns in the East.⁶⁸ After 301, Diodoros is preserved only in fragments. Polybios also covered Rome's war with Antiochos III and with Antiochos IV but much of his history after Book 5 is fragmentary and we lack his reflections on the earlier Seleukids. The Roman historian Livy supplies more evidence particularly for the campaigns of Antiochos III against the Romans. For the early Seleukids we have lost much of what was written by local historians: Berossos and Megasthenes survive only in fragments although these are extremely valuable.⁶⁹ Beyond these sources we must turn to the later church chroniclers such as Eusebius for the summary of the events of certain reigns. The Jewish writers, Josephus, the authors of I and II Maccabees and the book of Daniel provide some information, but it is focused narrowly on Judea which only became part of the Seleukid empire at the very end of this study's time frame. Finally, we can turn to Athenaios and his sources for some sporadic notes on the Seleukid kings. Most problematic for this study is the fact that these narratives rarely discuss the iconography or ideology of the state explicitly, although some information may be gathered either from events or the narratives themselves.

The evidence from epigraphy is more extensive although its usefulness is limited in creating an overview of Seleukid ideology as it tends to be both geographically specific and biased towards particular kings. The epigraphy is mostly limited to Asia Minor and northern Syria, but there have been some significant finds elsewhere. Epigraphically, Antiochos III's reign has the most to offer and has been recently well examined by John Ma.⁷⁰ However, there are other important documents concerning the relations between individual cities and kings.

Outside of the Greek sources the picture is better in particular for Babylon. The Babylonian astronomical diaries provide an invaluable source for Seleukid history.⁷¹ Furthermore, a series of newly translated cuneiform documents also shed considerable light on the situation at early Seleukid Babylon.⁷² These documents as well as the Borsippa Cylinder of Antiochos I⁷³ provide insights into the ideological dealings between the king and his non-Greek subjects that cannot be overlooked.

Structure and argument

The reign of Seleukos I was concerned with the creation of an empire from the

fragmentation of Alexander's conquests, and as a result, his iconography is the most diverse and most closely related to Alexander's of the Seleukid kings. The most prominent god on Seleukos I's coinage was Zeus, as it was on Alexander's. This book outlines the steps which Seleukos I took to dissociate himself from being just a subordinate of Alexander and to present himself as a Zeus-favoured king in his own right. Antiochos I was required to legitimise his family's rule over the territories his father had conquered and to establish an acceptable dynastic heritage which could justify his rule. I argue that it was a result of the need to establish dynastic rather than personal legitimacy that the Seleukid image of Apollo and Apollo as the Seleukid ancestor developed during the reign (and co-reign) of Antiochos I. This change resulted in the image of Zeus largely disappearing from the coinage of the Seleukids until the reign of Antiochos IV.

The starting and ending dates for this study differ from the traditional division of Seleukid coinage established by Newell which runs from Seleukos I to Antiochos III.⁷⁴ This study instead argues that Seleukid coinage functions as an ideological block from the reign of Antiochos I to the reign of Seleukos IV, and that Antiochos IV's coinage marks a coherent return to the ideology of both Seleukos I and Antiochos I.

While recent works on the Seleukid empire have begun to reassess the empire, there has been no systematic study of how Seleukid iconography relates to the ideology of the ruling house.⁷⁵ A great deal of attention has been devoted to the problems facing the Seleukids, single aspects of their empire or individual regions, and in addition, there are an increasing number of specialised studies and general surveys.⁷⁶ In numismatics, great progress has been made in the cataloguing and ordering of Seleukid coins which has allowed for greater precision in assessing chronology and in particular in understanding late Seleukid history. However, no attempt has been made to examine why the iconography developed in the way in which it did. I believe that by answering these questions we can better understand how the Seleukid kings related to their native populations in order to reinforce their rule.

The aim of this book is to not explore the entirety of the Seleukid empire, but rather to focus on the development and use of a particular type of iconography that I believe was reflective of Seleukid ideology during the period of their greatest power. The book is divided into four further chapters which focus on the creation of the Seleukid state and its ideology as distinct from that of Alexander, a chapter on the creation of a purely Seleukid ideology linked to Apollo, a chapter on the lasting influence of this ideology, and finally the partial abandonment of Apollo to the iconography of Seleukos I.

As such, the first chapter will explore in detail how Seleukos began to move his iconography away from that of Alexander and establish his own identity as

a monarch. This chapter argues that Seleukos at first utilised Alexander's coinage imagery before beginning subtle modifications that related the image specifically to his new status as a Zeus-favoured king. As one of the immediate successors to Alexander, Seleukos' claim was partially based on his connection to the king, but as he became more successful he was able to begin to differentiate his own image and promote his own legitimate rule. This chapter also argues that it was because of Antiochos I's need to establish his own legitimacy and to separate it from Alexander and the Ptolemies that Seleukos I became the scion of Apollo and the founder of the Seleukid house, rather than Alexander.

The second chapter shows that the subtle attempt to differentiate Seleukos' and Alexander's connections to Zeus discussed in [chapter one](#) was abandoned by Seleukos I's son and successor, Antiochos I, who preferred to emphasise the god Apollo. I argue that he adopted Apollo not to turn away from the syncretistic possibilities of Zeus and Herakles favoured earlier by both Alexander and Seleukos, but rather did so because the image of Apollo more readily lent itself to specific interpretations in the major centres of the empire: the Greek Apollo in Asia Minor, Nabû in Babylonia, and the image of a legitimate king in the East, albeit a Greek one.

The third chapter discusses the possible rationale behind the continuation of the Apollo type until the reign of Seleukos IV. It argues that Antiochos II adopted the imagery of his father in an attempt to reinforce his own legitimacy by the continuation of a particularly Seleukid pattern. Furthermore, it discusses how both Antiochos Hierax and Seleukos II used competing images of Apollo to define their own claim to the Seleukid throne. It also notes that while Seleukos II was eventually victorious militarily, the traditional iconography adopted by his rival and brother was restored by his descendants, and that this stressed the importance of iconographic continuity with Antiochos I. The discussion then turns to Seleukos III–Seleukos IV and demonstrates that even during the period of Seleukid resurgence under Antiochos III and regrouping under Seleukos IV the familial patron remains relatively unchanged. A brief analysis of how certain usurpers either abandoned Seleukid imagery or incorporated it will balance the discussion on Seleukid continuity. This balance demonstrates the power of the image created by Antiochos I for the early Seleukid house and raises significant questions as to Antiochos IV's motives in breaking with this tradition.

The final chapter discusses why Antiochos IV broke with the family image. I propose that his adoption of Zeus is specifically linked to the regions that the coinage is produced in and that the retention of Apollo is related to the long-standing successful integration of the god into the cultural context of Mesopotamia. This chapter argues that Antiochos IV's new coinage reflects a

continuation of familial policy of associating with the most useful syncretistic deity in the most important regions of the empire. It is rather a condition of the shifting scope of Seleukid ambitions that forces the change rather than the zeal of a convert.

Notes

- 1 See Chrubasik 2016 on the failures of the Seleukid state to move beyond charismatic kingship as a mode of governing.
- 2 Tarn 1951, 781.
- 3 Mitchell 2018.
- 4 Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993.
- 5 Much of the recent work of the Seleukid Study Group has focused on the interaction between the Seleukids and their subjects in line with Sherwin-White and Kuhrt's model, e.g. Erickson 2009; Erickson and Wright 2011; Engels 2011; Engels and Erickson 2016; Wenghofer and Houle 2016; McAuley 2016.
- 6 Kosmin 2014, 5.
- 7 Briant 1990; Kosmin 2014.
- 8 Sherwin-White 1987; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993.
- 9 Boiy 2002, 2004; Erickson and Wright 2011; Kosmin 2013; Stevens 2014; Strootman 2014.
- 10 Strootman 2014, 26.
- 11 Downey 1988.
- 12 See Ogden 2011a, 2011b, 2017 for the development of Alexander legends and their use by Seleukos.
- 13 Held 2002, 2004, 2005.
- 14 Plutarch *Life of Crassus* 33. Cf. Engels 2017 for continuity between the two courts and the degree of Hellenisation in Parthia as a result of Seleukid influence.
- 15 Here the Seleukids develop as 'impersonal' beings who at the same time inhabit real bodies. See helpfully, Feeley-Harnik 1985.
- 16 Kertzer 1988.
- 17 See also Earle 1997, in particular chapter 5 on the development of ideology (as well as the importance of resource surplus and military might).
- 18 See Ma 2000 for an explanation of how this worked in practice through Antiochos III's constant renegotiation of Seleukid power in Asia Minor.
- 19 See Doyle 1986 for 'hegemony' as differentiated from 'empire'. The Seleukids clearly fall within Doyle's (1986, 12) characterisation of a hegemonic power where they often controlled 'much or all of the external, but little or none of the internal, policy of other states'. This distinction varies depending on location within the empire, although I would

argue that the Seleukids tended not to intervene in local internal policies, unless necessary, even in areas that could be considered core to their empire.

20 ἦν δὲ παραπλήσιος ὁ νοῦς τῶν ὑφ' ἑκατέρου παρακαλουμένων. ἴδιον μὲν γὰρ ἔργον ἐπιφανὲς καὶ κατηξιωμένον προφέρεσθαι τοῖς παρακαλουμένοις οὐδέτερος αὐτῶν εἶχε διὰ τὸ προσφάτως παρελθέναι τὰς ἀρχάς, τῆς δὲ τῶν προγόνων δόξης καὶ τῶν ἐκείνοις πεπραγμένων ἀναμνησκοντες φρόνημα καὶ θάρσος τοῖς φαλαγγίταις ἐπειρῶντο παριστάναι.

21 See Chrubasik 2016 for the possible modes of usurpation within the empire.

22 Ogden 1999, xix.

23 Bernays 1928.

24 Or to quote Cornford's definition: 'that branch of the art of lying which consists in very nearly deceiving your friends without quite deceiving your enemies'. Cornford and Guthrie 1953, foreword.

25 We inevitably have more evidence for these types of activities from the Ptolemaic court, for example the procession of Ptolemy Philadelphos for which Kallixenos' description comes down to us. Rice 1983; the description of the Adonis Festival in Alexandria from Theocritus' *Idyll* 15; as well as others. However, it is unlikely that the Seleukids did not also hold similar events throughout their empire, for example Antiochos IV's military parade at Daphne in 166 BC: Diod. 31.16.1; Tac. *Hist.* 5.8.4–5.

26 See Muccioli 2013 for the most advanced study on the use of epithets by the Hellenistic kings.

27 See e.g. Ogden 2011b; Holton 2014 for an analysis of the significance of foundation myths for the Hellenistic kingdoms.

28 For the role of both of these women in the formation of early Seleukid propaganda see: Engels and Erickson 2016.

29 The territorial claims were flexible and could be revised to suit the current historical circumstances, for instance Antiochos III's insistence on control of Thrace despite its loss to the Seleukid house two generations previously. Polyb. 18.51.

30 Capdetrey 2007.

31 For an analysis of the development and roles of royal friends see: Savalli-Lastrade 1998.

32 Strootman 2013, 43.

33 Habicht 1958 proposed a mostly Graeco-Macedonian elite on the basis of statistics, Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 124–5 strongly rejected this view. Most modern views follow Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, cf. McKenzie 1994; Strootman 2007, 129–30. For defenders of Habicht's view see: Herman 1997. For a good introduction to dealing with the complexities of ethnic identity in ancient Mesopotamia see: Van Driel 2006.

34 Strootman 2007, 129–33 is undoubtedly correct that the simplistic view of ethnicity as one of purely ethnic origin is unsuitable given double naming practices, and the traditions (largely but not exclusively in Greek literary discussions of events in the West or in the Greek epigraphic traditions). We follow Strootman in understanding the court as culturally Graeco-Macedonian and that the elite presented themselves at court within this culture context. Of course, this does not exclude them acting in other ways in other cultural contexts. See Spek 2009 for how this cross-cultural identity functioned in Hellenistic

- 35 While the Seleukids appear to have controlled the images produced on coinage, we can no longer take coinage as a proxy for the independence of various parts of the empire. See (Meadows 2001).
- 36 The scholarly views of the usefulness of using coinage as a medium for transmitting messages has varied considerably, from A.M.H. Jones rejection to broad acceptance, even as the word 'propaganda' has been debated. This debate has largely focused on Roman coinage of the imperial period. See, for example, Jones 1956; Levick 1982; Wallace-Hadrill 1986; Levick 1999; Hekster 2003. For the uses of coinage as a medium for reconstructing Hellenistic history see: Thonemann 2016.
- 37 Aperghis 2004, 280, 284.
- 38 See Houghton and Lorber 2002, 358 for the argument that only written instructions were circulated; for a discussion of official Hellenistic portrait types particularly in regard to statues see: Smith 1988, 27–31. Houghton and Lorber's conclusions seem to fit well within Smith's more general thesis. Their hypothesis that no model image was circulated in addition to the written material seems unnecessary.
- 39 See Ramsey 2011 for a discussion of the ramifications of the degrees of independence of the Seleukid officials, although her discussion does not deal with mint officials her conclusions concerning the independence of officials are still applicable. Cf. Capdetrey 2007, 277–82, 306–21.
- 40 See Holt 1999, 92–3 for an analysis of early Diodotid coinage; cf. Price 2005, 117–24 for a similar up-swell in local iconography on coinage in periods of relative autonomy. In the period under discussion, Seleukid royal coinage appears fairly tightly controlled and only limited allusions to local types appear.
- 41 Recently, Jakobsson 2011 has argued that the development of Baktrian independence was not as gradual as previously argued. He argues that the portrait of Antiochos on the obverse is a Baktrian Antiochos rather than Seleukid one. More persuasively Wenghofer and Houle 2016; Wenghofer 2018 have argued for a more gradual break between Baktria and the Seleukids, and a greater degree of toleration on both sides.
- 42 See chapter two for a discussion of the development of the Apollo image. See also Iossif 2011.
- 43 For a good recent synthetic analysis of the Seleukid economy see: Aperghis 2004; for more detailed individual studies see: Chankowski and Duyrat 2004; both supersede the analysis of Rostovzeff 1941.
- 44 Mørkholm 1991, 20; Howgego 1995, 51–2; Houghton 2004.
- 45 Houghton 2004, 49–50.
- 46 Houghton 2004, 49–50.
- 47 Howgego 1995, 52–4; Mørkholm 1991, 64 for the date of the shift of the Ptolemaic weight standard.
- 48 Houghton 2004, 52; Aperghis 2004, fig. II.I, 217.
- 49 Aperghis 2004, 220.
- 50 Aperghis 2004, 217.

- 51 Aperghis 2004, 220; see also Howgego 1995, 35–7 for state expenditure as the primary concern for new coinage.
- 52 Aperghis 2004, 219–20.
- 53 Aperghis 2004, 220. See the discussion in chapter two for the possible *adventus* coinage for Antiochos and Stratonike in the eastern half of the empire.
- 54 It is interesting to note that the Seleukids generally seem to be deficient in a coinage for the middle of the spectrum that could be used for larger everyday purchases, in particular silver drachms. See: Houghton 2004, 51.
- 55 Aperghis 2004, 223–4 for the ratio of bronze to gold and silver and the overvaluation of bronze.
- 56 Mørkholm 1991, 6. Cf. Meadows 2001 for the importance of not overestimating a city's independence or dependence on the basis of its ability to produce civic bronze coinage.
- 57 Livy 42.6.7; Le Rider 1993.
- 58 See Aperghis 2004 for a discussion of the Seleukid monetary system.
- 59 Zahle 1990, 127.
- 60 See Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 27; Iossif 2011 for the attempt of Antiochos I to establish a sense of dynasty with the creation of the Apollo types.
- 61 See Chrubasik 2016, 90–101 for a recent analysis of the image of Hierax as a legitimate king rather than as a usurper.
- 62 See Svoronos 1904 for a survey of Ptolemaic coinage.
- 63 Mørkholm 1991, 15.
- 64 See Mørkholm 1991, 15–17 for the problems of understanding die linkages and the related analysis.
- 65 Newell 1938, 1941. In 1977 and 1978 a revised edition with updates by O. Mørkholm was released; Newell and Mørkholm 1977, 1978.
- 66 Houghton and Lorber 2002; Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008.
- 67 App. Syr. 52–70.
- 68 Diod. 18, 19.
- 69 Drews 1975; Kuhrt 1987; Verbrugghe and Wickersham 2001.
- 70 Ma 2000.
- 71 Sachs and Hunger 1988, 1989; Geller 1990, 1991; Spek 1993, 1997.
- 72 These remain unpublished except on the Livius website. They are referred to by their numbering as Babylonian Chronicles of the Hellenistic Period (BCHP).
- 73 Sherwin-White 1983; Erickson 2011; Kosmin 2013; Stevens 2014.
- 74 Newell 1938, 1941; Houghton and Lorber 2002; Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008.
- 75 Kosmin 2014 comes the closest but spends relatively little of his discussion on the largest block of surviving evidence for Seleukid ideology (coinage).
- 76 A general survey that focuses largely on the dynasty is Bevan 1902; for large political surveys see: Kosmin 2014; Grainger 1997; for survey of the empire which highlights the

importance of non-Greeks in the empire see: Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993; for Seleukid institutions see: Bickerman 1938; Capdetrey 2007; for the finances of the kingdom see: Aperghis 2004; Rostovtzeff 1941; for a look at religion in the empire see: Bilde et al. 1990; Downey 1988; Hannestad and Potts 1990; Held 2005; for religious architecture; for the interactions of the Seleukids with the temples and their environs in Asia Minor see: Dignas 2002; for a series of studies on Hellenistic kingship see: Bilde 1996; Chrubasik 2016; Engnell 1967; Billows 1995; Fowler and Hekster 2005; Frankfort 1948; for the chronology of the early Hellenistic period see: Boiy 2007; for a study of Seleukid art see: Fleischer 1991; for a biography of Seleukos I see: Mehl 1986; Grainger 1990; for Antiochos III see: Ma 2000; for Antiochos IV see: Mittag 2006; for Seleukid women see: Coşkun 2016.

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Creation of an empire

While in general the iconography of Seleukid coins centres on Apollo, this was not the case at the start of the dynasty. As can be expected in the creation of a new ruling entity attempting to define its position in a shifting landscape, the representation of Seleukos I's dynastic images shows the greatest variety and the least consistency of any of the Seleukid monarchs. While both ancient commentators and modern scholarship on the Seleukids emphasise the link between the king and what became his house's patron god and ancestor, this link was not definitively present until the very end of the king's reign. In fact, as this chapter will demonstrate the ideological justification of Seleukos' kingship shifts through three distinct phases during his reign and the full implications of this shift are not apparent until the reign of his son and successor.

I argue that early in his reign Seleukos looked back to Alexander and his personal connection to the king and to the traditional god of kingship Zeus to justify his power. This then shifted as Seleukos developed his own personal prestige to attempt to supplant Alexander as the founder of a new dynasty with his own connections to Zeus. The final phase of the transition to what became dominant Seleukid ideology occurred when Apollo supplanted Zeus as the patron of the royal house. This final change only occurred during the reign of Antiochos I. Furthermore, the important respect for native religions that appears to be consistent throughout the history of the house (with the notable exception of Antiochos IV) begins during Seleukos' reign. Additionally, Apollo and Zeus were not the sole gods of the empire and Seleukos took care to offer the appropriate respect to both Greek and native gods throughout his kingdom. Seleukos I adopted the traditional role of the king as a pious benefactor of the gods and he does not seem to have missed any opportunity to reinforce his legitimacy through association with the local gods.¹ This is especially evident in Babylon and Hierapolis, where native gods appeared on royal coinage (Ba'al and Atargatis), as such, a variety of Greek and non-Greek gods appeared on Seleukid coinage.

This chapter will examine how Seleukos attempted to develop a set of royal

imagery that drew both on Alexander and on a personal connection to Zeus, in order to justify his rule over the largest portion of Alexander's empire. The limited contact that Seleukos' empire had with the Mediterranean between his retaking of Babylon (312 BC) and the battle of Ipsos (301 BC) may have affected how Seleukos presented himself to his largely non-Greek subjects. In this connection, I believe that the horned-rider coins which I will discuss not only depict a Macedonian king but also draw on traditional local iconography. In the first instance, however, after successfully gaining a Mediterranean foothold with his victory at Ipsos, Seleukos was forced not only to rely on his personal connection to his citizens at Babylon and subjects further east, but also to compete directly with his former allies and other successors to Alexander: Lysimachos, King of Thrace, and Ptolemy, King of Egypt. Both of these could claim a closer connection to Alexander as they had held high positions within Alexander's inner circle. To succeed in his position – at least as far as the contest over imagery was concerned – Seleukos chose to continue many of Alexander's traditional coin types even after he took a royal title, as did the other successors. At the same time, however, Seleukos also began to create new personal connections to the traditional Macedonian royal god, Zeus. Seleukos was therefore able to legitimate his rule both through his connections to Alexander and through his own role as a Zeus-favoured king.

A new Alexander? The first attempt at a Seleukid image

In order to assess how Seleukos came to play a new role and therefore supplant Alexander as the foundation of royal status for the Seleukid empire, we first must examine the role Alexander played in early Seleukid propaganda. Seleukos made very limited use of Alexander's image compared to his rival successors, in particular Ptolemy and Lysimachos. Early in his reign, mints under Seleukos' control reproduced the same types produced under Alexander with a series of sporadic developments that introduced Seleukos' own symbols.² Outside the modification of Alexander's types, Seleukos only produced a single version of an image of Alexander which only appeared at three eastern mints in a relatively limited time period, c. 300–298.³ The design of this coinage at all three mints is nearly identical and marks a significant change in iconography of Seleukid coinage which had hitherto been a continuation of Alexander's types.⁴ The obverse of the new coin types features the head of Alexander facing to the right in an elephant headdress with the

skin tied around his neck in imitation of the common Alexandrine Herakles type. The reverse features a standing Nike facing the left holding a wreath and stylus. The reverse type is nearly identical to the common Nike on the reverses of Alexander's Athena/Nike gold coins. The gold coinage from these three mints featuring Alexander is not on the more common Attic weight standard but on the Persian standard, suggesting that the coins were designed only for circulation in the East. Therefore, the major innovation on this coinage is the image of Alexander. The image of Alexander on this coinage draws heavily on the Ptolemaic coinage issued from 322–317 BC.⁵ This is interesting as Seleukos' version of the Alexander-in-elephant-scalp motif did not draw on the contemporary Ptolemaic image, rather on the first Ptolemaic model of this image, which Seleukos had most likely first come across while in Egypt.

But while the overall image of this coinage is similar to early Ptolemaic versions of the image, the removal of specific Egyptian characteristics, the horn of Ammon and the mitra, would have attempted to make the image more useful as part of a Seleukid claim to the status of heir to Alexander's eastern empire. Furthermore, the adoption of Ptolemaic imagery may reflect the cooling relations between Seleukos and Ptolemy around 300 BC.⁶ However, it seems that the choice of image may have been too similar to the Ptolemaic version and thus it proved ineffective as a marker of Seleukid status. It seems that the potential audience, likely Macedonian soldiers serving in the Seleukid army,⁷ rejected a Seleukid association for the elephant headdress with Seleukos as it was never used again.

In attempting to place the significance of this iconography, it is normally taken to refer to one or all of three closely contemporaneous events: Seleukos' campaign to India, his victory at Ipsos, and/or the foundation of Seleukeia-on-the Tigris.⁸ The reverse of this coinage makes it clear that the coinage makes a claim to some victory, as the image of Nike on the reverse normally crowns the Seleukid horned horse. The other example of coinage featuring images of Alexander comes from bronzes from Susa and Ekbatana. The types are nearly identical at the two mints and are divisible into two denominations: the obverse of all coins features the image of Alexander in the elephant headdress; the style of the lower jaw of the scalp is dependent upon the mint and is identical to that of the gold image. The reverse of the larger denomination features the image of Nike standing to the left holding a wreath and stylus. She often appears to be crowning an anchor.⁹ The reverse of the smaller denomination features an anchor with the flukes upward. All of the bronzes feature a legend that reads '[coin] of Alexander'.

These bronze coins all reinforce the Seleukid claim to the Alexander heritage by the inclusion of two common symbols of Seleukos I: the horned-horse head and the anchor. These coins also seem to derive their motif from the

simultaneously issued precious metal coinage, and therefore likely have the same effect in mind. That is, an assertion of Seleukos' claim to the status of an equal to Alexander on account of the similarities between their eastern conquests.¹⁰

The choice of the elephant headdress had clear connections in the Ptolemaic coinage with Alexander's battles in the East and his mastery of elephants, but also on Seleukos' personal conquests.¹¹ After Seleukos' eastern anabasis and his meeting with the Mauryan king, Seleukos controlled more elephants than even Alexander had managed to herd. At Ipsos, he proved that he could use his 500 pachyderms effectively. Seleukos' connection with elephants was well known, prompting Demetrios' jab at Seleukos' status as king, naming him the master of the elephants.¹² Taking this slur into account and the prominence of elephants on the rest of Seleukid coinage, the Seleukid failure to reuse this image strongly suggests that it quickly ceased to fit into Seleukid propaganda. Indeed, the removal of the link between Alexander and elephants on Seleukos' coinage may elucidate part of his renegotiation of his status as he moved from satrap to king.

This elephant headdress coinage was produced in a period when there was a notable uptick in literary references linking Alexander to the Seleukid empire. Perhaps this shift in propaganda in the immediate aftermath of Ipsos represents Seleukos' second shift in status from a satrap and potential successor to Alexander to a legitimate royal successor and heir to all of Alexander's empire. In his narration of events relating to this period, Plutarch relates that in a dream Alexander abandoned Antigonos and Demetrios before the battle of Ipsos for Seleukos and Lysimachos.¹³ While the story is probably the result of anti-Antigonid propaganda¹⁴ it is unclear whether it arose from partisans of Seleukos or Lysimachos or both. However, for a Graeco-Macedonian audience, the circulation of this story would have represented a clear shift in support from those who still looked to the recently deceased king for guidance. It was this new status as Alexander-favoured king that Seleukos first sought to exploit. At the same time, the groundwork may have been laid for his claims to the diadem, for example the episode of the lost diadem discussed below may also have been connected to Seleukos at this time. Ipsos marked a clear turning point in the relation of the successors both to each other and to Alexander. Before the battle, the reunification of the empire (or even Europe and Asia) under Antigonos remained a very real possibility; after the battle it appears that only Seleukos still held the ambition and the power to reunite the whole empire. While this dream was never formally abandoned by any of the Hellenistic kings, after the battle for most it appears to have ceased as a practical ambition.¹⁵

For Seleukos his recent successes and his greater goal of reuniting

Alexander's empire may have inspired him to take up the mantle and image of Alexander. However, his performance as potential heir must have failed to connect with the armies who still remained loyal to Alexander. Perhaps Ptolemy's stronger claims and control of Alexander's body prevented any other successor from securing this status as heir. Since Seleukos rather quickly abandoned his attempt to utilise Alexander's image and establish his status as heir to the empire, he shifted tactics and began to replace links to Alexander with his own claims of personal success and asserted his own status as a legitimate Zeus-favoured king.¹⁶

Indeed, Seleukos' other coin types emphasise his connection with Alexander only through the connection to Zeus. This was particularly the case with Seleukos' *Nikephoros* coinage, which became the most widely used type in the western part of his empire after 300 and was introduced into the eastern capital, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, in c. 295 BC. Most interestingly, the *Nikephoros* type may have first originated under Antigonos at Antigoneia, a city which Seleukos destroyed and indirectly replaced with Antioch.¹⁷ The presence of Nike suggests a strong connotation of victory. This would have been especially relevant from Seleukos after his victory over Antigonos. These coins mark a continuation of the Alexander tradition, but also suggest a new association of Seleukos with Zeus, where Zeus is the god responsible for Seleukos' victory.

The *Nikephoros* coinage is often considered victory coinage since it portrays the goddess of victory crowning Zeus.¹⁸ The victory alluded to on these coins must be that of the battle of Ipsos, which was a battle fought between the successors of Alexander in 301 BC, as coins with similar iconography are also used by the other successors after the battle to advertise their victories. On the reverses of some of Lysimachos' coins, Athena is shown facing left with a spear and shield at her side, while in her left hand she holds a winged Nike. The goddess Nike is reaching out to place a wreath on the Λ in Lysimachos' name as it appears in the legend. The obverse shows a head of Alexander with flowing hair, a diadem, and a ram's horn.¹⁹ The action of Nike crowning the name Lysimachos clearly represents divine support, in this case from Athena and Nike. Lysimachos also made clear use of Alexander's divine image with the stunning portrait on the obverse. Ptolemy, having taken Alexander's body, also made use of Alexander's image on his coinage by fashioning multiple portraits of Alexander. On the other hand, the *Nikephoros* type which Seleukos produced is not as clearly connected to Alexander as it lacks a portrait of the king.²⁰

Demetrios Poliorketes, the son of Antigonos and a combatant for the remains of Alexander's empire, also made a clear break with the Alexander tradition. Although his coinage contains many of the same elements as the coinage of the other successors, it does not always reference Alexander. One of

Demetrios' victory types features Nike on the prow of a ship and an Archaic Poseidon on the reverse. Even though he was defeated at Ipsos, Demetrios still issued coinage which reinforced his naval supremacy through the use of victory images.²¹ The lack of Alexander reference may be related to the story in the first-century AD biographer and philosopher, Plutarch, in which Demetrios and Antigonos are abandoned by Alexander in a dream before the battle for choosing the watchwords 'Zeus and Victory' rather than 'Alexander and Victory'.²² Although late, this story may represent a contemporary shift in propaganda by the successors. Alexander's former lieutenants claimed a close connection to Alexander whereas Demetrios was unable to claim an equivalent connection after his father's death in the battle at Ipsos, as he had not served under Alexander. Seleukos faced a similar problem, although of a slightly different kind, since while he was one of the contestants for honours after Alexander's death, he had held an inferior position under Alexander. Rather than compete on inferior terms, it seems that Seleukos sought to rival Alexander in other ways and establish his own claim to kingship.

Seleukos: founder of cities

One of the most important perceivable shifts in Seleukid policy after the battle of Ipsos was Seleukos' new impetus towards founding cities. The performance act of founding a city had been mostly a royal prerogative under the Argeads²³ and Alexander had founded several cities, notably Alexandria next to Egypt and a series of Alexandrias in the eastern half of his empire. Plutarch attributes to Alexander the largest number of city foundations, with over 70 cities.²⁴ The actual number may have been much lower,²⁵ as Plutarch seems to include even Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris as one of Alexander's foundations! It is clear that Plutarch, among others, considered Alexander as the city founder *par excellence*, but here too Seleukos attempted to rival his predecessor's status. In his summary of Seleukos' career, Appian appears to attribute over 50 city foundations to Seleukos,²⁶ although in fact not all of these would have been Seleukid foundations.²⁷ Seleukos was not alone in founding cities, the other successors all had founded cities as their power waxed. In the territory that eventually comprised the Seleukid empire, the most important of those was Antigoneia, but no other successor could match the number of Seleukos' foundations.

In the aftermath of Ipsos, Seleukos established what would become his most important foundations. In Mesopotamia he founded his first new capital

Seleukeia on the Tigris while in the newly conquered territories of Syria he founded his most enduring legacy: the Syrian tetrapolis of Seleukeia, Apamea, Antioch, and Laodikeia.²⁸ In Syria, particularly in his foundation of Antioch, Seleukos entered into direct competition for control over titles in the region with both Antigonos and Alexander.²⁹ Antigonos' foundation, Antigonea, had occupied a prime position in the Orontes valley. However, Seleukos felt unable to simply rename the prior foundation after himself and forced the occupants of the city to move to his new foundation. This act must have been designed to de-emphasise the status of Antigonos by removing all reference to him from the region, while at the same time reminding the inhabitants that Seleukos had defeated and replaced their former king.

The act of founding a new city granted the king the opportunity to reinforce his royal status through the performance of rituals which recalled his connections to the divine and his role as founder. The foundation of Antioch received a foundation legend nearly equal to that of Alexandria at Egypt where divine providence played a key role. In Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* a god/man appears to Alexander in a dream and speaking lines from Homer, he instructs Alexander where to build his new city.³⁰ Not content with simply a Homeric origin for the city founded by divine guidance, the foundation of Alexandria at Egypt was also accompanied by what at first was considered a negative omen; the grain that Alexander laid out to demarcate the city limits was consumed by birds.³¹ The subsequent reinterpretation of the omen suggested that it was a message that the city will feed millions.³² There is a similar use of grain and animals in the founding legend of Antioch, but the negative omen is here absent. Seleukos used his elephants to mark out his towers and grain to mark out streets.³³ Here the negative omen turned positive from Alexandria was not repeated, but the use of Seleukos' elephants and the grain suggests a similar motif.

Two of the key features in the stories of the foundation of Alexandria are the divine instruction and an ambiguous omen which is interpreted in a positive light. These same features recur in the foundation myths for the most important Seleukid cities founded by Seleukos I. Libanius' telling of the foundation story for Antioch bears repetition:

And Zeus sent from his sceptre to the altar his companion, the beloved bird. And it flew down into the middle of the fire and seizing the thighs wrapped in flames, carried them off. When the event caught the attention of all eyes and had made clear what was done was not done without the gods, Seleukos put his son on his horse in order to follow the flight from earth and to guide the horse along the path of the bird, wishing to know what the bird would do with the things which it had snatched away. And he, while riding and looking upwards, was led to Emathia by the bird. The eagle, descending there, placed the sacrifice on the altar of Zeus Bottiaeus, which was established by Alexander after the spring refreshed him; and it seemed to all even to those not skilled in interpreting that

Zeus was advising to build a city on that place. And thus Alexander's desire for a settlement, and the beginning of the task moved towards its end and the chief of the gods was our founder due to his prophetic sign.

Libanius

Interestingly this same foundation story is also told of the Syrian Seleukeia. While most scholars have preferred to see this tale of the founding of Seleukeia as duplication of the Antioch myth,³⁴ it is also possible that Seleucia, having been intended as Seleukos' new capital, was the original subject of the myth which was then transferred to Antioch as that city quickly surpassed its neighbour in prestige. Clearly, the myth was designed to convince the settlers who were forced to abandon Antigoneia that Seleukos received divine support for his new cities.³⁵

As Alexander's status as the founder of cities far surpassed that of Seleukos, Libanius' account even places Seleukos' main foundation as part of Alexander's plan. Thus, for Libanius, it was not just the will of Zeus through which Seleukos accomplished his task, but also through that of Alexander. Given that the founding of Antioch was essentially a refounding of an early Antigonid city in the region, it is unlikely that the founding actually had anything to do with Alexander.³⁶ Here we can see the longer-term failure of Seleukos' status compared to that of Alexander, for even when the foundation bore his familial name, either Antioch or Seleukeia, they could instead be assigned to the great conqueror.

While the act of foundation was, normally, a single performance it could be commemorated repeatedly through a variety of means: Libanius' oration serves as one type of example, the iconographic expression of the mythological links serves as another. The remembrance of the act of foundation did not remain static as we have seen and was reconstructed as the new interpreters saw fit. So, although it appears that Antioch was founded during the brief period when Seleukos was the most interested in using Alexander as a symbol of his status, the myth that the city was founded by him seems to have arisen later when Seleukos' star had already dimmed. The evidence for this comes from the coinage produced early in the city's history. If Seleukos had been promoting his links to Alexander through the joint foundation of the city, then it seems likely that there would be some iconographic traces of the connection. But the coins minted at Antioch show no clear links with Alexander, and in fact they marked the first western Seleukid deviation from the Alexander type. It was there that Apollo made his first western appearance on Seleukid coinage.³⁷ This bronze coinage does not depict any connection to Alexander; rather it stresses the significance of the local god, Apollo at Daphne. A similar picture emerges from the numismatic evidence at Seleukeia-in-Pieria, where

the reverse of the local bronze coinage depicts a thunderbolt, an anchor on a thunderbolt, or a winged thunderbolt³⁸ (Figure 1.1).

It is clear that the most important god promoted by the Seleukids in connection with the founding of this royal city was Zeus who was symbolised through his sign, the thunderbolt. It seems rather than connecting his city founding to Alexander, Seleukos generated foundation myths tied to particular gods or events and that, at least in the case of Seleukeia-in-Pieria, the coinage clearly reflects those legends. Furthermore, the prominent role of Apollo on the bronze coinage serves as a reminder of Seleukos' claim of the status as the offspring of that god.



Figure 1.1 Bronze, Seleukeia-in-Pieria. Seleukos I: Zeus/Thunderbolt. Yale University Art Gallery. 1938.6000.1686

If divine guidance played a role in the foundation of Antioch through the eagle sacrifice (and Seleukeia either through the eagle or through thunder)³⁹ then the gods made an even clearer sign of their support in the foundation of one of Seleukos' capitals: Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris. The foundation myth for this city contains all of the elements of the quintessential Alexandrian foundation: divine intervention and the subversion of a negative interpretation of events. The story goes as follows. The Magi did not want a Greek stronghold in the region and therefore falsified the propitious timing for the foundation. With the plans in place, and the army awaiting the command, and before Seleukos could give the signal, a voice was heard that ordered the building work to start. Seleukos' heralds were unable to stop the work. Seleukos, being frightened of the consequences of the inauspicious timing, inquired of the Magi what had happened. Here, the Magi was forced to confirm what Seleukos had feared as inauspicious omen was in fact the will of the gods subverting the Magi's trick.⁴⁰ As he explained to Seleukos:

That was the reason why not even you could hold them back. What can be stronger in human affairs than a king, unless it be a god, who overcame your intention and supplanted us in giving you directions about the city, being hostile to us and to all the people round about? What can our resources avail hereafter with a more powerful race settled alongside of us? This city of yours has had a fortunate beginning, and it will be great and enduring. We beg that you will confirm your pardon of our fault which committed from fear of the loss of our own prosperity.

Appian Syr. 58

One significant element that appears in the foundation of Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris myth is the potential local resentment of Seleukos' building scheme and of the Macedonians in general. This is particularly interesting given Seleukos' seemingly positive relationship with the city of Babylon.⁴¹ Nonetheless through these foundations Seleukos clearly intended to challenge the primacy of Alexandria, the great city in the control of his former ally Ptolemy. But by the promotion of his own founding myths, Seleukos can have been said to have created not just a single city blessed by the gods, but at least two to rival the one in Egypt founded by Alexander.

It is not only in the mythology surrounding the founding of his cities that Seleukos competed with Alexander and with the other successors, but also in the sheer number of the cities he founded. Appian's long list of foundations by Seleukos far exceeds the number that is assigned to any of the other *Diadochoi* or even at this early period to Alexander himself. In fact, as Fraser in his *Cities of Alexander the Great* has demonstrated, many of the cities that were later assigned Alexander as their founder were most likely foundations of Seleukos or Antiochos.⁴² So it appears that despite the belated attribution of many cities to Alexander, during the wars of the *Diadochoi* it was Seleukos who took the lead in founding the greatest number of cities. The act of founding so many cities would have provided the backbone for a larger narrative which promoted Seleukos' status as sovereign.

His own Zeus

As we have just seen, the strongest links between Seleukos, Alexander, and Zeus can be found in the literary tradition. Here, Seleukos is often connected to Alexander and many of the portents which are used to justify Seleukos' rule either occurred during Alexander's campaigns or have Alexander in them, and they are often associated with the foundation of cities. This is most clearly evident in Libanius' foundation story for Antioch which we have discussed above in relation to Alexander. Additionally, Libanius relates a less well-

known version of Seleukos' origin; this version connects Seleukos to Alexander through the Macedonian royal lineage. Seleukos is said to have been a descendant of Herakles through Temenus.⁴³ This heritage links Seleukos both to Zeus and to Alexander (as the Macedonian monarchs claimed descent through this same line). It is important to note here that Zeus was the principal god for the Argead kings of Macedon, especially Philip II and Alexander. In fact, after Perdikkas I, the Argead kings considered themselves the offspring of Zeus through two routes; descent from Argeas, son of Macedon, son of Zeus and from Temenos, descendant of Herakles, son of Zeus.⁴⁴ Therefore, Libanius' account of Seleukos' descent through Temenos links Seleukos with the line of Argead kings that ended with Alexander IV. This is the only clear literary indication of a direct link between the Seleukid royal family and the Argead royal house. This may be a result of the fourth-century (AD) date of this work, a date by which the origin of the Hellenistic monarchs could well have been forgotten and assimilated to the family of Alexander. Antiochos I of Commagene made the same connection in his royal tomb at Nemrud Dag, where he traces his own lineage through the Seleukid house back to Alexander.⁴⁵ The basis for the familial connection between the Seleukids and Alexander is unclear and may purely be a result of Antiochos I of Commagene's propaganda, and this confused tradition may be reflected in Libanius' narrative. As we have already seen Seleukos advertised a connection to both Alexander and Zeus as Ptolemy and Lysimachos did.⁴⁶ However, Seleukos' connection to Alexander was far more limited than the other new royal houses.

Given the importance of Zeus to the Macedonians and to kings more generally, it is hardly surprising that Zeus was the god most frequently depicted on Seleukos' coinage, as was also the case for Alexander's coinage. Zeus appears on four distinct types of Seleukos' coinage. Two of these types are related to Alexander's image of Zeus. These two are Alexander's type, often with the name Seleukos instead of Alexander, and a modified version of the type. The obverse of both types features the head of Herakles in a lion-head headdress. The image on Alexander's tetradrachms was a bearded Zeus seated on a throne carrying an eagle in his outstretched right hand. In his left hand he holds a staff behind the back of the throne. As he carries an eagle he is known as Zeus *Aetophoros* (Zeus carrying an eagle) (Figure 1.2).

Seleukos modified this type by replacing the eagle with the goddess of victory, Nike; therefore the figure becomes Zeus *Nikephoros* (Zeus carrying Nike) (Figure 1.3).

The Zeus *Aetophoros* type remained popular throughout the reign of Seleukos, although at many mints it was replaced by the Zeus *Nikephoros* type. This modified issue shows Zeus as a patron of Seleukos while retaining a

connection to Alexander.



Figure 1.2 Silver tetradrachm, Ekbatana, Seleukos I: Herakles/Zeus *Aetophoros*. Yale University Art Gallery. 2001.87.11925

In the first instance, however, Seleukos needed to reaffirm his connection to Alexander, as the other successor kings after Alexander also did. The post-Ipsos coinage reflects the importance of the victory motif of the successors. It also stresses the importance of Alexander either in victory on the Lysimachos' coinage or by his conspicuous absence on some of Demetrios' coinage. Therefore, the choice of Zeus *Nikephoros* as the main deity on the coinage of Seleukos I may represent a desire to be seen as a legitimate continuator of the Alexander's empire and as the victor of Ipsos.



Figure 1.3 Silver tetradrachm, Sardis, Seleukos I: Herakles/Zeus *Nikephoros*. Triton IX, Lot: 991. www.cngcoins.com

Importantly, Seleukos' other associations with Zeus suggest that he may have claimed a personal connection to the god and did not only desire to

emulate Alexander, but also to equal him. Seleukos appears to have taken a middle path between the veneration of Alexander as founder of his empire, chosen by Lysimachos and Ptolemy, and the path of self-deification chosen by Demetrios with fewer references to Alexander.⁴⁷ Thus Seleukos not only drew on Alexander for legitimacy, but also appears to have adopted much of the symbolism of Alexander's coins, though he also modified it so that it referred to himself rather than to Alexander.

There are three important pieces of Hellenistic evidence which show Seleukos as favoured by Zeus but not connected to Alexander. One of Seleukos I's innovative coin types features Zeus and elephants. On this type the head of Zeus appears on the obverse and an elephant-drawn chariot appears on the reverse ([Figure 1.4](#)).

The reverse of these coins refers to Seleukos' elephant corps which was a key element in his army. Their importance for Seleukos led Demetrios to disparage Seleukos as the master of the elephants.⁴⁸ Furthermore, the elephants played a key role in Seleukos' victory at Ipsos. The obverse of these coins advertises a connection to Zeus that when combined with the reverse provides a specific reference to Seleukos' most famous fighting unit. The link between Zeus and the elephants must also contain a reference to Ipsos and victory (or Seleukos' victorious eastern campaigns) and provided a powerful claim to divine support. As this image does not relate to any image produced by Alexander, we should not view these coins as a simple continuation of the Zeus sponsorship of Alexander, but rather a new connection between Zeus and Seleukos.



Figure 1.4 Silver tetradrachm, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, Seleukos I: Zeus/Athena Promachos in a quadriga drawn by horned elephants. CNG online auction 110, Lot: 60. www.cngcoins.com

To support this case, there are also two other independent instances,

unrelated to the coinage, where Seleukos is connected directly to Zeus' cult during the Seleukid period.⁴⁹ In the first place, after Seleukos' death Athenian colonists at Lemnos substituted his name for that of Zeus in the festal libation.⁵⁰ It seems likely that Lemnos was recognising a mythological connection between Seleukos and Zeus when it celebrated him for liberating them from Lysimachos. Furthermore, Seleukos had received the cult title Seleukos Zeus *Nikator* in a list of the priests of the Seleukid family by the reign of Seleukos IV.⁵¹ This title suggests that Seleukos I was readily identified with Zeus within his empire and that this connection was no longer dependent on Alexander. Additionally, it suggests that the Zeus *Nikephoros* coinage can be associated with Seleukos' personal connection with Zeus and not just a modification of Alexander's coinage.

There is also other evidence, independent of the numismatic material, for the continued cult of Seleukos and Zeus long after the end of the Seleukid dynasty. A deed of sale from Dura-Europos from AD 180 includes a priest of King Seleukos *Nikator*.⁵² It is unclear whether or not this marks the continuance of a cult for Seleukos at Dura-Europos or whether the re-creation of the office is part of an archaising Seleukid revival as part of the Greek cultural renaissance under the Romans of the first–second centuries AD, often known as the Second Sophistic. An interesting relief from the same city shows Seleukos I *Nikator* crowning Zeus *Olympios/Megistos*.⁵³ The relief dates from AD 158, six years before the Parthians lost control of the city to the Romans. Although this relief also comes from two centuries after the end of Seleukid rule, the inhabitants of Dura-Europos either created a new connection between Seleukos and Zeus or continued a Seleukid tradition. Perhaps it was a conflation of the other successor mythologies and that of Alexander which created this origin myth for Seleukos. However, it is clear that by the second century AD Seleukos could be associated with Zeus in his own right.

The bull-horned king



Figure 1.5 Roman copy of head of Seleukos in Antakya Müze. Author's photograph.

One of the most intriguing features of Seleukos' coinage is the preponderance of bull horns. Not only does Seleukos posthumously appear with them as a sign of his deification, but horses and elephants also seem to receive them on Seleukid coinage. It is perhaps this oddity that gave rise to the aetiology contained in Appian's Seleukos *logos*.⁵⁴ The third and final section of Appian's narrative contains an extremely brief summary of Seleukos' career and provides two aetiologies for elements of Seleukid self-representation. The first is the explanation of his cult title Nicator, which Appian attributes either to his success in war or less preferably to his killing of Nicator (Nicanor).⁵⁵ Appian's first explanation is plausible and may provide the explanation for the title that Seleukos received in cult.⁵⁶ The second aetiology is more interesting: in a *logos*

that seeks to explain the appearance of bull horns on statues of Seleukos and coinage which arose after his death (Figure 1.5), Appian gives us the following: ‘Physically he (Seleukos) was well-muscled and large, and once when a bull broke free from its bonds at a sacrifice of Alexander’s he blocked it by himself and wrestled it down with his bare hands. For this they add horns to his representations’.⁵⁷



Figure 1.6 Bronze, Antioch, Seleukos I: Winged Medusa/Butting bull. CNG online auction 200, Lot: 70. www.cngcoins.com

The story may be related to the first widespread Seleukid coinage. The first coinage which Seleukos introduces in the majority of mints across his empire is a bronze coinage which features the obverse of a gorgon and the reverse of a butting bull. We will return to this coinage at the end of the chapter (Figure 1.6).

As with the other legends discussed, we have the repetition of the narrative in Appian across a range of Seleukid iconography. As once again, the iconography is repeated not only on high-value coinage but also on bronze which suggests a wider audience, comprising all coin users within the empire, for the message. Within a Graeco-Macedonian context, the story retold by Appian bears a striking resemblance to other stories of heroic strength by the other *Diadochoi*. Lysimachos used the foreparts of a lion as a personal symbol, in a similar way to the use of bull horns by Seleukos.⁵⁸ This symbol may have referred to the story in Curtius in which Lysimachos killed a lion single-handedly.⁵⁹ Ptolemy’s heraldic animal was the eagle, which linked him to both Zeus and Alexander, and may have alluded to a story of his birth where he was exposed and saved by the eagle of Zeus.⁶⁰ The use of personal symbols tied to important *logoi* by the other successors suggests that the Seleukos-bull *logos* served as an explanation of both the horned representations of Seleukos,

and as representation of his might and therefore legitimated his claim to kingship.

However, this is not the only explanation for Seleukos' horns. Once again, the message of the Seleukos-bull *logos* and the horned coinage was not exclusively Graeco-Macedonian. Bulls have a long tradition of symbolic importance in Mesopotamian kingship.⁶¹ In Mesopotamia, the narrative concerning Gilgamesh's killing of the bull of heaven would have provided an important parallel for Seleukos' triumph over the animal,⁶² and tied the defeat into a greater cosmic significance. It was not only Seleukos' defeating a bull that held significance in Mesopotamia, but also the bull horns attached to his helmet (or head) invoked a long-standing divine and kingly tradition.⁶³ The bull was not exclusively a Mesopotamian image either, but also had significant iconographic importance within Persia as well. As Hoover points out: 'Through the iconography of the bull, Seleukos connected himself to native Iranian religion and broader Zoroastrian concepts of holiness and legitimacy'.⁶⁴ As with the other performances of Seleukid power we can glimpse through Appian's narrative, the use of taurine symbolism could have spoken to a wide range of audiences by utilising their own cultural inheritances.

One area where Seleukos' status both as defeater of bulls and as city founder appears to converge is in an odd description of the foundation of Alexandria appearing in the gamma recension of the *Alexander Romance*; 'At the East gate, upon the loftiest tower of all he [Alexander] erected his own statue, and surrounded it with the others of Seleukos, Antiochos, and Philip the physician. He made the (statue) of Seleukos recognisable as it bore a horn for courage and invincibility'.⁶⁵ Here the horns are not connected to Seleukos' physical strength or even to an actual bull, but rather to more abstract qualities, which may derive from a range of bull associations. The origins of this description tied to the foundation of Alexandria are impossible to unravel, as they are inevitably tied to the amalgamation of stories which became the gamma recension. It seems plausible that the story contains a remembrance of Seleukos' role as city founder (perhaps the reverse of the process which tied Alexander to the foundation of Antioch) and the notable connection of Seleukos with a horned statue. The possible Jewish origins for the text may suggest a path of transmission through the Seleukid empire, where the legends concerning Seleukos continued long after his death and the end of the empire.⁶⁶

Despite these stories, there is a third possibility for the origin of the Seleukid horns and that is they represent the invincibility, power, and connection to the divine of Seleukos. This interpretation may tie into the significance of defeating bulls both in Mesopotamian and Iranian religion, highlighting the significance of that narrative to Seleukos' eastern subjects. Furthermore, they

perhaps function as a variation on the horns of Ammon which Alexander bears on Ptolemy's and Lysimachos' coinage (as well as elsewhere).⁶⁷ In this case, the horned portraits of Seleukos would reinforce the transformation of Seleukos' status from that of a subordinate to Alexander to that of an equal. Therefore, it is unsurprising that only two successors are depicted with horns and that they are the two who go to the greatest lengths to compete with Alexander: Demetrios and Seleukos. Leaving aside the identity of the controversial figure in the horned helmet on Seleukos' coins which we will discuss in the next section, Seleukos himself is clearly depicted deified and horned on the coinage of his son. Furthermore, Libanius seems correct in asserting that at Antioch Seleukos had a horned statue⁶⁸ as remnants of a Roman copy have been found and can be seen today in the Antakya Müze⁶⁹ (Figure 1.5).

These two aetiologies reflect Appian's concern with origins, but also as with the aetiology of the anchor, they most likely are remnants of Seleukid propaganda which provided a repeated reminder of Seleukos' royal status which was reflected in literature and in the visual arts.

The horned horseman

One of the most interesting problems for identifying representations of Seleukos is the image of a helmeted figure (Figure 1.7) and of that figure on a horned horse. The man on these coins has been identified either as Seleukos or as Alexander.

As we have just seen, images of Seleukos with bull horns became prominent in the Seleukid empire, even before his death. It seems significant that the horns which Alexander is often depicted are the ram horns of Ammon rather than the bull horns which Seleukos adopted. I will now turn to the image of the horned horse and rider, as the image is not only iconographically inclusive through the use of bull horns but also through the use of Persian dress (Figure 1.8).



Figure 1.7 Silver tetradrachm, Susa, Seleukos I: Seleukos I/Nike erecting a trophy. Triton VIII, Lot: 525. www.cngcoins.com



Figure 1.8 Silver drachm, Ekbatana, Seleukos I: Seleukos I/Seleukos I riding a horned horse. Numismatik Lanz München Auktion 102, lot 289. www.lanzauctions.com/showcoin.php?no=1006613548

These coins feature the typical obverse of Alexander's coins, the head of Herakles in a lion-skin headdress, the reverse features a male rider wearing a horned helmet and holding a spear in his right hand riding a prancing horned horse. The legend reads '[coin] of King Seleukos'. According to Houghton and Stewart the figure is dressed wearing:

a chlamys that billows behind him, a sleeved tunic (*chitoniskos*) that terminates below the hips; trousers; and soft, wrinkled boots. On his head he wears what is evidently an Attic helmet with cheekpieces and a neckguard. From the helmet rise two curved horns; an animal's ear juts rearward from its base. He sits on a saddle-cloth made of the skin of an animal, which could be a bull, a lion or a panther (only the sinuous tail just above the horse's rump shows clearly). In his right hand he holds a spear horizontally, close to his side. The horse, bridled and reined, is adorned with horns that curve upward above the

Those who have wished to see the figure as Alexander have seen this as a representation of Alexander's adoption of Persian dress. Diodoros states that Alexander never adopted Persian trousers or a sleeved jacket.⁷¹ Hoover's argument that this should prevent us from seeing Alexander in this image seems overly pedantic, as this was an image authorised by Seleukos that clearly sought to integrate Graeco-Persian cultures, and the trousers were a clear sign of Persian dress.⁷² However, this does not mean that we should see the image as Alexander, his adoption of Persian dress was always controversial⁷³ and Alexander did not enjoy the best reputation among the Persian elite.⁷⁴

It therefore seems unlikely that Seleukos would have chosen to represent Alexander in such a controversial fashion, whereas the adoption of Graeco-Persian dress by a King of Babylonia and Persia, who had an Iranian wife and *mixobarbaros* son no less, would not be out of place and may have even been expected. The clothing provides an avenue for interpretation of this image. The figure is represented as king by means of the helmet. He is identified as a Macedonian by the weapon he carries and manner in which he rides. His clothes are a mix of Persian and Greek costume, identifying him as both Persian and Greek. Finally, the best interpretation of the helmet may be of the heroic Babylonian king or god, which the helmet most closely emulates.⁷⁵

The image appears to represent Seleukos' kingdom in about 304 BC, when he controlled Babylonia, Baktria, and the Iranian satrapies and was beginning to look west. The image shows Seleukos as the legitimate ruler in all of these regions by his adoption of regional attributes, while still retaining an image that is recognisable more generally. Images of humans with horns (either directly attached or attached to helmets) was a common iconographic trope in Persian, Babylonian, and Greek cultures and would have been immediately recognisable as a symbol either of divinity or of heroised kingship. This must be the image which Seleukos wished to project if the coins are correctly dated to c. 304, which places them shortly after his journey eastward and before his western expansion. At this point, Seleukos would more likely seek to advertise his own recent victories and establishment of power than to recognise those of Alexander. The audience for the coins was a mix of his military and the population near the mints. The two sets of coinage were minted in the heart of the old Persian empire, at Susa and Ekbatana, therefore the audience undoubtedly included some Iranians as well as Babylonians. All three – his Graeco-Macedonian soldiers, his Babylonian and his Iranian subjects (and probably soldiers), despite their slightly different cultural referents for the image – could have identified a divine or heroised king.

Having identified the figure as Seleukos, I will now attempt to identify the horse. Whenever the figure in the horned helmet is identified as Alexander, the horned horse is identified as Bucephalas, in a punning reference to his name ox-head.⁷⁶ If the image of the helmeted hero is not Alexander, as seems likely, then the horse should not be Bucephalas. Miller and Walters have convincingly shown the image of the horned horse is a Seleukid symbol that is not connected with Alexander. Furthermore, they have shown that the legend connecting the Seleukid horned horse to Bucephalas is not contemporary but a result of a confusion that began with the *Alexander Romance* and has continued into the modern era.⁷⁷ Indeed Miller and Walters have recently re-examined all of the evidence for the identification of Bucephalas as represented with actual bull horns and have shown that the coin images predate any such description. Furthermore, they make a strong case for the name of Bucephalas being derived from the common Thracian brand of an ox-head. So if the horned horse is not Bucephalas then it follows that the rider is not Alexander, and therefore the most likely candidate is Seleukos. The opposite is equally true, if the figure is Seleukos and not Alexander, then the horse is most likely not Bucephalas.

In fact, Hoover and others have suggested that the horse was the one on which Seleukos fled from Babylon in order to escape Antigonos. This identification is based on a statue described in Malalas, which Seleukos had set up to honour his steed in Antioch. Miller and Walters reject this attribution as the horse is not described as horned, which seemed to them necessary to link it to the image of the horned horse. However, this seems unnecessary. The horned horse has a clear connection with Seleukos as it appears to be linked with Seleukos' deification after his death.⁷⁸ As the horse on which Seleukos escaped Antigonos is the only horse we have connected with him, and for which he erected a statue, we should probably identify them as the same figure. The background to the iconography of the horned-horse image is clearer. The horns are linked both to the Greek tradition of divine horns and to the Mesopotamian tradition. Additionally, the horns relate the horse to Seleukos' bull iconography. It is perhaps possible to see some images of a bucranium (ox-head) on Seleukid coins as that of the horned horse or vice versa, especially if one considers the difficulty of delineating horned horses and bulls in miniature.⁷⁹ The horse may therefore make a statement concerning the power of the rider, who is able to control a divine horse.

The identity of the figure in the horned bust demonstrates how Seleukos was able to use an image that is similar to an image that could represent Alexander and to make it his own. These coins demonstrate that Seleukos was willing to separate himself from the image of Alexander, and this holds an important lesson for the Zeus coinage and for the legitimacy of Seleukos as a king. First it

forces us to recognise that Seleukos' use of Alexander's coinage served two purposes: to establish continuity with the former king, and then, as the image was modified, it served to legitimate the new royal house. Furthermore, as Seleukos developed his own connections with Zeus, the passage of divine legitimacy no longer necessarily passed from Zeus to Alexander to Seleukos, but could pass from Zeus directly to Seleukos. It is notable that outside of the coinage examined here, Seleukos I and his Seleukid successors seem to have paid very little attention to Alexander on their coinage. Furthermore, they neither incorporated him into their houses nor did they institutionalise him into a cult figure.⁸⁰ It may have been difficult for Seleukos to use Alexander in this manner as his body was clearly in Ptolemaic possession.

There seems to be a clear break between the coinage and the literary accounts concerning Seleukos' relation to Alexander. Alexander features more prominently in the literary accounts. This may be a result of the more expansive nature of the literary record as well as the powerful pull of Alexander's image for all writers concerned with his successors, rather than a choice by Seleukos himself. Seleukos sought to develop the images of Alexander into a new Seleukid image, not by abandoning the image of Alexander but rather by incorporating portions of Alexander's imagery into new types that emphasised Seleukos' own power. However, as his own successor's coinage demonstrates, Seleukos failed in this attempt and the new Seleukid image was created by his son and the coinage was stripped of most remnants of the Alexander image. The image created by Antiochos I became a more personal type that featured the portrait of the ruling king and the image of the new Seleukid ancestor, Apollo. This change moved the iconography of the Seleukid empire from one that drew on Alexander's imagery to one that was firmly based in the person of Seleukos I and the reigning king. The manipulation of Alexander by Seleukos I demonstrates the difficulties in defining what it meant to be a king and successor to Alexander in the period immediately following his death, and indeed the complexities of reflecting kingship, and what it might mean, in royal iconography, for those producing images as well as for those who had to interpret them.

Creating Seleukos 'the king': the anchor and a horned horse

I will now turn the rest of Appian's narrative. Its digression, which encompasses most of the fantastical stories about Seleukos, is neatly

encapsulated by the repetition of an oracle from Didyma. As with the city foundation, the oracular pronouncement concerning Seleukos' kingship and death would have helped secure Seleukos support from the Graeco-Macedonians. This is not necessarily the case for all of the stories Appian includes. In fact, many of these stories were probably recognisable by a variety of audiences as they tapped into older narrative traditions. After the first telling of the oracle response from Didyma, Appian begins his digression with a series of three stories that predict Seleukos' future kingship. The first two are usually interpreted as a form of divine favour. The first statement that a fire burst forth from his ancestral hearth is normally interpreted as a sign of his future kingship.⁸¹ While this sign of divine favour in Appian does clearly express his future kingship, its placement close to the other prophecies concerning his kingship and its similarity to Pausanias' version suggests that this should be its role.⁸² It is perhaps telling that Appian does not explicitly include Alexander in Seleukos' setting out from Macedon as Pausanias (1.16.1) does.⁸³ It may suggest that this story has two traditions, one that emphasises Seleukos' divine favour on his own, and one that emphasises Seleukos' divine favour in light of his connection to Alexander. While this story would have been understandable for a Greek (or even a Roman audience given our sources), the process of divination by flames and the possible connection to Iranian fire temples makes it tempting to also place the story within an Iranian tradition.⁸⁴ In this case, it would have preserved one of the many ways in which the development of Seleukos' royal status was made accessible to a wide array of audiences.

The second story is more extensive, and it is worth examining the text briefly as once again Alexander is not mentioned:

Also that his mother saw in a dream that whatever ring she found she should give him to wear, and that he should be king at the place where he should lose the ring. She did find an iron ring with an anchor engraved on it, and he lost it near the Euphrates. It is said also that at a later period, when he was setting out for Babylon, he stumbled against a stone which, when dug up, was seen to be an anchor. When the soothsayers were alarmed at this prodigy, thinking it portended delay, Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, who accompanied the expedition, said that an anchor was a sign of safety, not of delay; and for this reason Seleukos, when he became king, used an engraved anchor for his signet-ring.⁸⁵

– Appian, *Syr.* 56 (Translation White)

This story serves two functions in Appian's narrative, the first is that it clearly develops an aetiology for the prominent use of the Seleukid anchor on coinage beginning while Seleukos was still a satrap⁸⁶ and the second is that it prophesises future kingship. This tale connects two stories by their function as aetiologies for the Seleukid anchor; the first section has often been connected with the longer birth myth of Seleukos recorded in Justin:

Seleukos' valour also was distinguished, and his origin was miraculous. His mother Laodike, it seems, after she had been married to Antiochos, a distinguished general of Philip's, dreamed that she conceived by sleeping with Apollo, and that, having been made pregnant, she was given a ring by the god as a reward for the sex, its stone was engraved with an anchor. Apollo bade her give it to the son she was to bear. The discovery of a ring with the same engraving in the bed the next day made it clear that the vision had been miraculous, as did the appearance of the sign of the anchor on the thigh of the little Seleukos himself. Therefore, Laodike gave the ring to Seleukos when he was setting out on the Persian campaign with Alexander the Great, and she told him about his origin.⁸⁷

– Justin 15.4.2–7

The myth contained in Justin 15.4 can be broken down into two separate parts; namely the story concerning the anchor signet ring, as in the Appian *logoi*, and the story of divine birth from Apollo. Finally, the version in Justin also appears to include elements similar to the fire story. In it the ring serves as the symbol of divine favour and possible kingship instead of the self-igniting fire. The version presented in the story preserved by Justin appears to be an amalgamation of a series of stories surrounding Seleukos I, and it uniquely combines elements that are also present but not explicitly connected in Appian.

The anchor symbol appears to be a key element of Seleukid iconography which demanded an explanation from the early chroniclers. The anchor was a relatively common symbol on the coinage of Seleukos I and has prompted a variety of explanations including his service as *navarch* under Ptolemy⁸⁸ and a Babylonian symbol of various sorts.⁸⁹ However, if we accept that the *logoi* in Appian and Justin are Seleukid in origin, then we should not reject the notion that the anchor was a personal symbol of Seleukos that may have even had its origins before he left Macedon. The legend was then expanded upon to increase the legitimacy of Seleukos after he had become king. This neatly parallels the usage of the anchor on Seleukid coinage; the symbol appeared as early as 312 on his return to Babylon and continued after he had taken the title of king. As with the fire legend, the Babylonian symbolism and the importance of the river Euphrates may have modified old Babylonian legends which created another audience who were required to confirm Seleukos' status as king.⁹⁰ The stories concerning the anchor ring may have developed in two stages and generated two different traditions; the first version which was accompanied by the self-starting fire explained Seleukid kingship through divine favour (and if we are to judge by Pausanias' version the deity was in all likelihood Zeus), and the second stage which specified Apollo as the god who specifically favoured Seleukos. There is no reason to believe that the myths were exclusive of each other, and they could have circulated in a variety of formulations depending on the audience and its pre-conceptions.

Unfortunately, both the Mesopotamian sources and the Iranian sources are devoid of examples of Seleukid myth-making.

Appian's third story concerning the future kingship of Seleukos does not fit together in the same way as his first two. The *logos* goes as follows: while Alexander was surveying the lagoons around Babylon the wind blew off his diadem and it landed on the tomb, someone swam to collect the diadem and placed it on their own head to keep it out of the water. The person was then either rewarded or killed.

Versions of this story also occur in Arrian and Diodoros and the purpose of the story appears to be the foretelling of Alexander's death and perhaps should be linked to the Near Eastern tradition of the 'substitute king' ritual.⁹¹ Therefore the story appears unlikely to have been part of a set of myths designed specifically to promote Seleukid kingship, given the variance in who finds the diadem, either a sailor or Seleukos, and the possible results: reward, death, or kingship. The story is only occasionally connected with Seleukos; as Appian tells us: 'Some narrators, however, omit the whole of this story and say that it was not a sailor at all, but Seleukos who swam after the king's diadem, and that he put it on his own head to avoid wetting it'.⁹² It is better to treat this as a story that originated near the time of Alexander's death (perhaps even after it occurred) and was only later connected to Seleukos once he had established himself a second time in Babylon or perhaps after Ipsos. However, as with the other versions of the stories that appear in Appian's account, we can again see a potential range of audiences that could have reinterpreted the story through their own cultural prisms.

Thus, the first section of Appian's digression on Seleukos comprises two different sets of stories, the first set is the stories concerning the fire and the anchor, and the second is the story with Alexander's diadem. The first set could have connections with Alexander, but the versions present in Appian lack these references and therefore create a narrative of Seleukid legitimacy without reference to the king. As these seem to be the narratives that are reflected in Seleukid coinage, in particular the use of the anchor, it appears that their repetition – through both narratives and iconography – formed an important part of the process of establishing Seleukos' status as legitimate king without reference to Alexander. Furthermore, we can see that the narratives have elements which could have been understandable by different cultural audiences; the same can be said for the development of Seleukos' iconography as we will see below. When combined with the Apollo birth myth in Justin, which is also epigraphically attested albeit later,⁹³ we see a version of Seleukid royal status that is not dependent on Alexander but rather directly parallels Alexander's claims to divine descent from Ammon/Zeus.

Failure of an image: the Medusa/bull coinage

The final section of this chapter examines what I believe is the first example of an attempt to create a unified image of Seleukid power that responded to both local concerns and was part of central Seleukid myth-making about the king and the dynasty. It is interesting that this first attempt appears on a range of bronze coinage rather than silver. Throughout the Hellenistic period bronze coinage remained far more locally oriented than gold or silver, although eventually much of the production in the western empire eventually settled into Antioch. Interestingly, after this first attempt at a systematic bronze coinage, the systemisation of Seleukid iconography took place on gold and silver coinage to a far greater extent than on bronze. One reason for this possible early focus on bronze coinage was a reluctance to fully abandon the coinage model created by Alexander which was becoming familiar across the empire.

Let us now turn to the iconography. As we have seen, bulls appear to have special significance for Seleukos and perhaps as a result bulls appear on coinage issues from Sardis, Magnesia-on-the-Meander, Tarsus, Antioch, Carrhae, Uncertain Mint 8, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, Susa, Ekbatana, and Aï Khanoum⁹⁴ ([Figure 1.6](#)). As is self-evident, this broad range of mints spanned the entire empire and as a result bulls are the most common image on Seleukos' bronze coinage. The most systematic representation is the Medusa/bull coinage.

The bull image can be divided into three general types, the charging/butting bull, the bull head, and the standing bull. The butting bull is portrayed on the Medusa/bull type but there appears to be little ideological difference in the different bull postures. In creating this coinage, Seleukos I had a wide range of bull imagery to draw upon even if he was not fully aware of the practices of Babylonian religion as discussed in [chapter two](#).⁹⁵

Nevertheless, the interpretation of the Medusa/bull coinage remains difficult. Since as early as Babelon in 1890, scholars have attempted to link Medusa to Perseus to the foundation of Antioch.⁹⁶ However, it is not until the end of the Third Syrian War (246 BC) that Antioch takes pride of place within the Syrian tetrapolis.⁹⁷ Therefore it seems unlikely that a broadly imperial type would reflect the foundation of a single city. Houghton and Lorber rightly look elsewhere for an explanation, although not entirely satisfactorily: 'The blood of the dying Medusa had supernatural powers: from one vein Asklepios took blood to revive the dead, and from the other blood with poisonous properties.

At a time when dynastic transition drew increasingly imminent, Medusa may have been invoked because she combined apotropaic magic with the gift of renewal'.⁹⁸

Houghton and Lorber quickly connect the bull to Seleukos' personal imagery, which is undoubtedly correct, but they fail to find a satisfactory explanation for the image of Medusa. As Wallace-Hadrill has argued for Augustan coinage, we should examine these coins holistically rather than only reflecting on the reverse imagery.⁹⁹ The obverse image for the majority of these bronze bull coinages is a gorgon in profile. While profile portraits of individuals are much more common than frontal portraits in Greek art, frontality is a common feature of gorgon imagery. It is therefore somewhat surprising to see it employed on Seleukid coinage here. The type as a whole is likely derived from the contemporary (middle of the fourth century onwards) coinage from Parion in Mysia (Figure 1.9).



Figure 1.9 Silver hemidrachm, Parion, Mysia, Gorgoneia/Bull. CNG online auction 64, Lot: 137. www.cngcoins.com

However, as would be expected on the Parion coinage, the gorgon is facing the viewer. Therefore, there are three questions of this Seleukid coinage that need explanation. The first is the choice to make the gorgon appear in profile and whether it has any significance. The next is why did the Seleukids choose to replicate this particular image type. The final question is if this bronze coinage is an imitation of the Parion coinage then should we connect it at all to the other images of Seleukid propaganda including the extensive use of bulls elsewhere.

The second of these questions is perhaps best answered by analysing the differences between the Parion type and the Seleukid type. It is probable that at least in Asia Minor, these Seleukid bronzes would have reminded their users of the Parion type. However, the ideological background of the Parion type is

difficult to establish, it likely ties the city into the Gorgon/Perseus legends. It may be this connection that the Seleukid court sought to promote at least in Asia Minor. Beyond Asia Minor, it is more difficult to determine the extent to which the Parion coinage was known or recognisably Parion. This may suggest that the Seleukids adopted an image that they found useful for their own ideological reasons and promoted it across the empire. It is perhaps interesting that the attempts to create a consistent image in bronze for the empire were abandoned by the sole reign of Antiochos I.

Whatever the significance of Parion for this coinage, the Seleukids certainly modified the image of the gorgon in a way that would have been apparent to anyone accustomed to looking at Greek art. There are two interesting features of this Medusa image, the first has already been mentioned – profile, the second is the wings that emerge from her head and she appears much more beautiful than other gorgons. Now this image may be distinctively Seleukid as it does not appear commonly elsewhere. There is a well-known sculptural example – the Medusa Rondanini (found in Rome) – which is often believed to have been a Seleukid gift most likely in the reign of Antiochos III.¹⁰⁰ The attribution of the Medusa Rondanini to the Seleukids is based on the close similarity between it and this coinage. Unfortunately, we do not have any versions of this Medusa type from within the Seleukid empire itself. Nicholas Sekunda will argue in a forthcoming paper that the image of the beautiful Medusa was one of the prominent iconographies that adorned Seleukid shields early in the empire.¹⁰¹ If he is correct, then it is possible to link the coinage, the shield imagery, and the Medusa Rondanini together and define them as Seleukid. Furthermore, it provides another possible avenue of interpretation to the appearance of Medusa on the coinage. Assuming this new version of Medusa served as a distinctive Seleukid iconography for the army, the repetition of the type could have served to highlight Seleukid military strength. As much of Seleukos' coinage features military imagery, this ties the coinage into other common Seleukid iconographic patterns.

While this links the image of the beautiful gorgon to the Seleukids, it does not explain the use of profile for the image of a gorgon. It is possible that the use of profile was designed to clearly demarcate these coins from the Parion coinage. Elsewhere in the empire, the profile portrait may have fit better with the image of 'Greek' coinage which normally featured profile images of gods. Therefore, if the Seleukids adopted the Parion image in part, while modifying it to make the image more Seleukid, then we should suspect some connection between the choice of the gorgon and Seleukid ideology. Ogden has argued that the image of the gorgon would invoke a connection to Perseus.¹⁰² Furthermore, the connection to Perseus therefore ties Seleukos into the foundation narrative (in Greek at least) of the Persian race. While this

connection may have been important both for those in Asia Minor and for the Macedonians/Greeks who were spread across his empire, this was not necessarily a conclusion that his subjects not familiar with Greek mythology would have understood. This lack of connection of the Medusa image in the East may also explain the appearance in profile. The image could appear as simply like one of the other figures who appeared on Seleukid coinage and proclaimed divine support for the king.

It is now necessary to attempt to draw the two strands together. On the obverse we have a symbol of a gorgon which may be distinctly Seleukid, and on the reverse, we have an image that recalls the *logoi* circulating about Seleukos himself. By identifying a broader context for the Medusa imagery we can undermine at least some of the scepticism of Houghton and Lorber about the role of Perseus in this ideology. If we can understand the Medusa imagery as linked to the Seleukid army, then instead of requiring Perseus be linked to Antioch, we can see the Seleukids exploiting the myriad possibilities of the location for Perseus' deed. The foundation story in Malalas not only suggests a connection between Antioch and Perseus but also one between Seleukos and Perseus, as Ogden has argued.¹⁰³ In this way we can interpret both sides of the coin within the same framework: the obverse and reverse both depict the image of the creature that has been overcome either by Seleukos or by his ancestor. The coinage when read holistically can allow the viewer to reflect both on Perseus' conquest of Medusa (which leads to his own claims on kingship) and on the stories they would have been hearing of the feats of Seleukos who likewise used them to justify his kingship. Both images represent the trophies of the respective kings and emphasise their power and kingly virtues. It may be the function of the gorgon head as a trophy that inspired its appearance in profile. For rather than using the trophy to conquer, here represented through the power of Medusa's gaze, Seleukos instead turns the image aside hiding its latent power.

As we can see, the first attempt at a common bronze coinage across the empire was iconographically and ideologically complicated. The image is similar to existing coinage which may have helped its regional circulation in Asia Minor, although as a bronze coinage its circulation was probably more contingent on a recognition of Seleukid power. The image of Medusa may have conjured a connection between the Seleukids and the heroes of the Greek past, which would have been reinforced by the bull image and its ties to stories circulating about Seleukos. Both images would have had broader resonance of kingly power across the entirety of the empire. The particular nature of the gorgon image and the strong connection between Seleukos and bulls could have transformed the image into a new image of Seleukid power. However, as with many attempts to create a new ideology that was adopted by a wide

range of the population, the abandonment of this coin type and the gorgon image may demonstrate that this attempt failed both economically and iconographically. The gorgon image does not appear widely in the Seleukid empire beyond this coinage in ways that are visible to us, which may be related to attempts to connect Seleukos more closely to Apollo who replaced all other Seleukid heroic ancestors. However, bulls, perhaps reflecting their long history of use as an image of kingship, continued to be used throughout the empire.

Passing on the diadem

The most difficult moment in the founding of a new dynasty is not necessarily the seizing of power, or the maintenance of it during the first ruler, but the successful passing of power from one generation to the next. Seleukos would have been well aware of this potential pitfall, as his own empire emerged from Alexander's failure to secure succession.¹⁰⁴ His solution to this problem was somewhat novel and involved passing his second wife, Stratonike, to his son Antiochos in what Ogden has termed a form of levirate marriage.¹⁰⁵ The most important part of this performance was not the handing over of wife from father to son, but rather the speech which accompanied it.¹⁰⁶ According to our preserved narrative, Seleukos used the speech to confirm his status as king and his ability to confirm the status of anyone in the empire, including his son.¹⁰⁷ This public act was reinforced with the transfer of the eastern half of the empire to Antiochos in 294 BC. This helped to crystallise the transformation in status and royal presentation that Seleukos had developed in his first decade of rule. Seleukos' new creation was dotted with a network of cities named after his closest family members, including his Iranian wife.¹⁰⁸ As we have seen, the ritual performance of the foundation of these cities provided an ideological justification for his power that was picked up and transmitted through increased monetisation. In turn these cities materially supported his regime as new settlers arrived and associated themselves with the new Seleukid geography. This early manifestation of Seleukid power spoke to its inhabitants not only in Greek narratives but also incorporated the languages and symbols of the native traditions across the empire.¹⁰⁹ The new myths which reinforced Seleukos' status changed throughout Seleukos' career: first it appears he attempted to tie himself to Alexander's legacy but later both the narrative reflected in Appian and the iconography served to place Seleukos as an equal to Alexander. Culminating with his ability to transfer royal status, Seleukos

presents himself as the all-powerful king. Finally, with his succession secured, he could take the final step of his separation from Alexander and have himself declared the son of a god; his son could then take this process one step further and make his father a god¹⁰ and create an image to rival Alexander. This link between city foundation and its renaming of the landscape and the mythical legends and images which Seleukos' iconography utilised would have firmly cemented the royal status of the Seleukid house in the minds of their new subjects.

Notes

- ¹ Walbank 1984, 83–5, 1992, 210.
- ² The earliest appearances of a symbol we generally link with Seleukos are on the so-called Anchor Alexanders. For these see Houghton 1991, 1998; Houghton and Lorber 2002, 43 for a discussion of the mint for this coinage, which Price 1991 had originally placed at Arados.
- ³ Houghton and Lorber 2002: Babylonian mint: no. 101; Susa mint: Gold: no. 183; Bronze: nos. 189, 190; Ekbatana mint: Gold: no. 218, Bronze: nos. 222, 223. See Kritt 1997 for the accepted dating of these issues; cf. Houghton and Lorber 2002, 67–8; Dahmen 2007, 15.
- ⁴ Mørkholm 1991, 113.
- ⁵ Dahmen 2007, 15; Hadley 1974, 53; Stewart 1993, 315.
- ⁶ Dahmen 2007, 15 suggests that this represents a cooling of relations between the two kings after Ipsos.
- ⁷ There is considerable difficulty in identifying end users with the production of any mint, Aperghis 2010 proposed an interesting solution which identified end users by mint markers, this has been generally poorly received, see de Callatay 2012.
- ⁸ Tarn 1938, 131; Hadley 1974, 53; Newell and Mørkholm 1978, 113; Stewart 1993, 315; Dahmen 2007, 15. Newell, Tarn, Hadley, and Stewart use the earlier dating of coinage to c. 305–300, and thus prevent an association of the coinage with Ipsos or the foundation of Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, as well as moving the production of this coinage closer to Seleukos' Indian campaign. Dahmen does not appear to prefer any of the three options she proposes. Hadley highlights the nature of Alexander as a protecting deity.
- ⁹ Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 189, 222.
- ¹⁰ Iossif 2004; Erickson 2012.
- ¹¹ Lorber 2012 presents an interesting new interpretation of this coinage which looks rather towards traditional Egyptian iconography and precedents.
- ¹² Plutarch, *Demetrios* 25.
- ¹³ Plutarch, *Demetrios* 29.
- ¹⁴ Hadley 1974, 59.
- ¹⁵ Meeus 2009.

- 16 Iossif 2004; Erickson 2012.
- 17 Houghton and Lorber 2002, 8.
- 18 Houghton and Lorber 2002, 8.
- 19 Hadley 1974, 57, plate VIIk; *SNG, Great Britain, Volume I, Part I. The Collection of Capt. E.G. Spencer-Churchill, M.C., of Northwick Park*. 1931, no. 106.
- 20 The continuation of the Herakles obverse may have been enough to suggest that Seleukos was a legitimate successor. This is especially the case if the Herakles obverse has obvious features of Alexander. However, this is not the same claim as placing the clearly recognisable image of Alexander on the coinage.
- 21 Hadley 1974, 57, plate VIII; see Bellinger and Berlincourt 1962, 29–30 for a more specific analysis of the message of this coinage.
- 22 Plutarch, *Demetrios* 29.
- 23 Billows 1995, 146–7.
- 24 Plut. *De Fort. Alex.* I.328E.
- 25 See Fraser 1996, 240–3. Fraser's table lists 57 possible foundations, with varying degrees of certainty.
- 26 App. *Syr.* 57.
- 27 Malalas 8.201–4 attributes 75 cities to Seleukos. Fraser 1996, 37–9; Cohen 1978, 11; Seyrig 1970, 290–311.
- 28 See Downey 1961, 24–45, 1963; Grainger 1990; Cohen 1978, 17. For Seleukeia: Malalas 8.199, Polyb. 5.59, 60 and Strabo 16.2.7. For Laodikeia: Malalas 8.203 and Strabo 16.2.9. For Apamea: Malalas 8.205, Strabo 16.2.10.
- 29 The role of dynastic myth in the foundation of the two Syrian cities, Antioch and Seleukeia-in-Pieria, has been discussed by Ogden 2011b.
- 30 See Welles 1962 on the problems of divine guidance in the foundation of Alexandria.
- 31 Plutarch, *Alexander* 26 for flour without the birds and similar interpretation see Arrian *Anabasis* 3.2.
- 32 Cf. the similar legend in the *Historia Alexandri Magni* 1.28–33. See Stoneman 2008, 27–49 for the foundation legends.
- 33 Libanius 11.90.
- 34 See Ogden 2011b; Grainger 1990, 57; Downey 1961, 61–3. A new mosaic depicting this foundation was recently found and then stolen Olszewski and Saad 2017. Another Roman mosaic depicting the foundation of Apamea has also been stolen: Olszewski and Saad 2016.
- 35 Cohen 1978, 57.
- 36 See Downey 1961, 24–45, 1963; Grainger 1990; Cohen 1978, 17.
- 37 Houghton and Lorber 2002, 18–22.
- 38 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 32–4.
- 39 App. *Syr.* 58.
- 40 App. *Syr.* 58.

- 41 Geller 1990, 5–6; Houghton and Lorber 2002, 43; Diod. 19.90–2.
- 42 Fraser 1996, 34–6.
- 43 Libanius, *Orationes* 11.91.
- 44 Le Bohec-Bouhet 2002, 42.
- 45 Cf. Sanders 1996.
- 46 Antigonids: See Le Bohec-Bouhet 2002, 41–50; Lysimachos: see Hadley 1974, 63–4; Seleukids: see below and Ogden 2017; Lagids: for the clearest ancient example see Theocritus 17.20–7, but Ptolemaic connections to Alexander were the most explicit both in their possession of his body and in Ptolemy’s literary creation, see Roisman 1984 for Ptolemy’s role in creating a narrative about the successors and Alexander.
- 47 For Demetrios’ cult which does not include any reference to Alexander before Ipsos see: Plutarch, *Demetrios* 10.18–22 and Diod. 20.46.2.
- 48 Plutarch, *Demetrios* 25.
- 49 For the cult of Zeus Seleukios see Debord 2003, 282–4.
- 50 Athenaeus 6.66; cf. Bevan 1900, 28, 1901, 626.
- 51 *OGIS* 245.
- 52 Welles, Fink, and Gilliam 1959, no. 25.
- 53 Downey 1988, 50 gives the god crowned as the Gad of Dura, who Drijvers 1980, 67 names as Zeus *Olympios* / *Megistos*.
- 54 See Ogden 2017 for the fullest explanation of the possibility of a Seleukos romance contained and evident mostly within Appian’s *Syriaka*.
- 55 Brodersen 1991, no. 293.
- 56 See Muccioli 2013, 340–2 for an analysis of the epithet.
- 57 Appian, *Syr.* 56.
- 58 Mørkholm 1991, 82.
- 59 Lysimachos and lion: Curtius 8.1.14–15; Ptolemy and the eagle: the eagle appears as an emblem on most Ptolemaic coinage.
- 60 *Suda* s.v. *Λάγος* = Aelian F283 Domingo-Forasté; cf. Hoover 1996, 26; Ogden 2011a; for eagles on Ptolemaic reverses see: Mørkholm 1991: Ptolemy I: figs. 97–100, 127 (cf. 485); Ptolemy II: figs. 284–6, 291–3, 296, 300–4, 306; cf. also fig. 494. Ptolemy III: figs. 309–10, 312, 314–15. Ptolemy IV: figs. 317–18. Ptolemy V: figs. 319, 321, 324–6, 328. Cleopatra Thea: fig. 635.
- 61 See Rice 1998, 85–115 for a summary.
- 62 Hoover 2011, 203–8.
- 63 Erickson 2012, 122–3.
- 64 Hoover 2011, 214.
- 65 *Historia Alexandri Magni* 2.28.
- 66 See Stoneman 2008, 58 for the Jewish origins of the legends; for the reappearance or continuation of images of Seleukos in the empire long after its collapse, there is a second-

- century AD relief of Seleukos crowning a god found in Dura-Europos. Downey 1988, 50 gives the god crowned as the Gad of Dura, who Drijvers 1980, 67 names as Zeus *Olympios* /*Megistos*.
- 67 Dahmen 2007, 42–3.
- 68 Lib. Or. 11.92.
- 69 Houghton 1986.
- 70 Houghton and Stewart 1999, 28.
- 71 Diodoros Siculus 17.77.5.
- 72 Hoover 2002, 51–62; while I would like to thank Vesta Curtis and Robin Lane Fox for their suggestion that the figure does not actually wear trousers, I agree with Stewart and Houghton that the figure is wearing trousers.
- 73 Plutarch, *Alexander* 45.
- 74 Hjerrild 1990, 144.
- 75 The famous Namar-Sin tablet shows a divinised Babylonian king represented with a horned helmet very similar to the one which adorns the horned rider. Pritchard 1954, no. 309.
- 76 Houghton and Stewart 1999, 29; Miller and Walters 2004, 45–54.
- 77 Miller and Walters 2004, 45–56.
- 78 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 322.
- 79 Cf. *PFS* 261*.
- 80 Errington 1976, 170; Hoover 2002, 54; for the opposing view see Hadley 1974, 50–65. While various cities and communities continued to mint Alexander's tetradrachms, the practice generally declined on royal Seleukid issues. The popularity of Alexander's tetradrachms as an international monetary standard is a better explanation of the continued issuing of these coins rather than any coherent policy.
- 81 See Hadley 1974, 59; Kai Brodersen 1982, no. 284; Appian *Syr.* 56 'It was said also that in Macedonia a great fire burst forth on his ancestral hearth without anybody lighting it'. (Translation White).
- 82 Pausanias 1.16.1.
- 83 Pausanias 1.16.1: 'And a little further away (a statue of) Seleukos whose future good fortune was shown by unmistakable signs. For Seleukos, when he set out from Macedonia with Alexander, sacrificed in Pella to Zeus, the wood that lay on the altar advanced of its own accord towards the image and it ignited without the application of fire'.
- 84 Engels 2017b.
- 85 Appian, *Syr.* 56: καὶ ὄναρ αὐτοῦ τὴν μητέρα ιδεῖν, ὃν ἂν εὖροι δακτύλιον, δοῦναι φόρημα Σελεύκῳ, τὸν δὲ Βασιλεύσειν ἔνθα ἂν ὁ δακτύλιος ἐκπέσῃ. καὶ ἡ μὲν ἡῦρεν ἄγκυραν ὀφθῆναι. Θορυβουμένων δὲ τῶν μάντεων ὥς ἐπὶ συμβόλῳ κατοχῆς, Πτολεμαῖον τὸν Λάγου παραπέμποντα εἰπεῖν ἀσφαλείας τὴν ἄγκυραν, οὐ κατασχῆς εἶναι σύμβολον. καὶ Σελεύκῳ μὲν διὰ τοῦτο ἄρα καὶ βασιλεύσαντι ἡ σφραγὶς ἄγκυρα ἦν.
- 86 See above for the so-called Anchor Alexanders.
- 87 Justin 15.4.2–7: *Huius quoque virtus clara et origo admirabilis fuit; siquidem mater eius*

Laodice, cum nupta esset Antiocho, claro inter Philippi duces viro, visa sibi est per quietem ex concubitu Apollinis concepisse, gravidamque factam munus concubitus a deo anulum accepisse, in cuius gemma anchora sculpta esset; iussaque donum filio, quem peperisset, dare. Admirabilem fecit hunc visum et anulus, qui postera die eiusdem sculpturae in lecto inventus est, et figura anchorae, quae in femore Seleuci nata cum ipso parvulo fuit. Quamobrem Laodice anulum Seleuco eunti cum Alexandro Magno ad Persicam militiam, edocto de origine sua, dedit.

- 88 Babelon 1890, viii; Mehl 1986, 77.
- 89 Haussoullier 1902, 127; Bouché-Leclercq 1914, 2:610.
- 90 Holton 2013.
- 91 Arrian *Alexander* 7.23; Diod. 17.16.5–7. See Hamilton 1969, 204.
- 92 Appian *Syr.* 56: οὐ ναύτην ὅλως φασὶν ἀλλὰ Σέλεθκον ἐπὶ τὸ διάδημα τοῦ βασιλέως ἐκκολυμβῆσαι, καὶ περιθέσθαι Σέλευκον αὐτὸ τῇ κεφαλῇ, ἵν' ἄβροχον εἴη.
- 93 I believe we should date the introduction of this legend between 287 and 281 BC based on the dedications to Didyma and inscriptions from Aegae and Erythrae *OGIS* 219.26–7; Powell 1925, 140 = *I.Erythrai* 205 ll. 74–5; Malay and Riel 2009.
- 94 Houghton and Lorber 2002: nos. 6–8, 11, 21–4, 47, 113, 125–7, 148–53, 191–3, 224–5, 238A–88.
- 95 Cf. Dalley et al. 1998, 39 for the image of bull horns as a feature of the divine in Mesopotamian religious iconography.
- 96 Babelon 1890, xxxiii; Ogden 2011b, 2017, 50–2.
- 97 Grainger 1997, 683; Houghton and Lorber 2002, 9.
- 98 Houghton and Lorber 2002, 9.
- 99 Wallace-Hadrill 1986.
- 100 Callaghan 1981.
- 101 Personal correspondence.
- 102 Ogden 2017, 50–2.
- 103 Ogden 2017, 50–2.
- 104 For the importance of dynastic succession and the important role it creates for women in monarchic societies see Ogden 1999; Harders 2016.
- 105 Ogden 1999, 124–6.
- 106 Appian *Syr.* 61; Plu. *Dem.* 38.
- 107 Breebaart 1967; Hillgruber 2010; Mesk 1913; Engels and Erickson 2016; Almagor 2016.
- 108 See Ramsey 2016 for the significant public role played by both of Seleukos' named wives.
- 109 Erickson 2011; Erickson and Wright 2011.
- 110 See Appian *Syr.* 63 for the establishment of the cult temple for Seleukos at Seleuciain-Pieria by Antiochos I. See Hannestad and Potts 1990, 116; Wright 2018 for the possible identification of the temple.

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The creation of a Seleukid deity

The problems of legitimacy that Antiochos I faced following his appointment to the position of co-ruler and later of sole monarch were significantly different from those of his father. The legitimacy of Seleukos I's claim to a share of Alexander's empire rested on several factors. Behind these factors lay the impetus to secure his kingdom as well as possible, largely by establishing and maintaining functional relationships with the major power groups of all parts of his expanding empire. One of most significant factors in establishing his legitimacy was his successful military conquest of the largest portion of Alexander's kingdom. The concept of spear-won land provided legitimacy in Graeco-Macedonian terms. However, this required continual military success to both expand and maintain power.¹

A second factor in Seleukos' legitimacy was his connection to Alexander. While he did not share the same close connection with Alexander as the other diadochs, particularly Lysimachos and Ptolemy, Seleukid propaganda emphasised his connection through the retelling of events that were constructed to foreshadow Seleukos' eventual royal power and granted him the imagined support of Alexander.² As Seleukos more firmly established his own power, he also represented himself as a Zeus-favoured king rather than merely as a successor to Alexander.³

A third factor, which was particularly important in the early stages of Seleukos' rise, was his close and largely positive relationship with the eastern inhabitants of his kingdom, most importantly Babylonia and Iran. This same model of power negotiation was then applied to other regions as they came under Seleukid rule.

Antiochos, on the other hand, was already endowed with royal authority and had been ruling the eastern half of the empire for nearly 15 years when his father was assassinated in 281. Despite this seemingly stable system, he still faced rebellion in the recently conquered western provinces.⁴ Owing to the success of both himself and his father in securing the loyalty of the eastern portion of the empire, no major rebellion seems to have occurred in those regions while Antiochos was occupied with reconquering the western portions

of his inheritance. Antiochos sought to legitimate his rule through two means, first as the son of the former king and second through his own military success. While it is uncertain if Antiochos had any personal military successes prior to becoming sole monarch, he had already begun to actively propagandise his new vision of dynastic legitimacy in the eastern half of the kingdom which may have contributed to its stability. With his assumption of the role of sole monarch he continued and expanded the significance of Apollo for himself and for his father, he deified his father and employed a royal calendar incorporating the regnal years of his father rather than beginning to count from the start of his reign. This created a continuous calendar system which constantly reinforced the legitimacy of the entire ruling house.⁵

Two key developments of Antiochos I's presentation of his dynastic claim to legitimacy were the promotion of Apollo as the divine patron of the royal house and also Apollo as the ancestor of the dynasty. These two aspects are normally connected; although as we shall examine below that is not necessarily the case. As argued in the previous chapter, it is clear that by the death of Seleukos I Apollo had begun to serve as an important patron of the dynasty. At a similar time or perhaps slightly later, Apollo was confirmed as the dynastic ancestor. The most prominent manifestation of this link was the new image created for Antiochos' coinage: Apollo seated on the omphalos. After its introduction which should be attributed to the mint at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris in c. 279,⁶ this image was to dominate Seleukid silver coinage for the next century. While divine support from other relevant or local gods was always sought, it appears that Apollo and gods who could be identified with Apollo were singled out for royal favours by Antiochos. Importantly, this shift to Apollo should not be seen as a refocusing of the dynasty on exclusively Greek deities as Zahle has argued⁷ but instead represented a nuanced approach in which Apollo was actively assimilated with other gods or traditional images of power in different cultural regions of the empire. This allowed for the presentation of a unified image of the empire that was also understandable by individual groups within the diverse populations under Seleukid control.

This chapter will first argue for the creation of the Apollo birth myth only after Antiochos had been associated with his father on the throne. It will then examine the ways in which the Apollo on the Omphalos/Apollo *Toxotes* imagery could have resonated in four of the main regions in the empire: Asia Minor, the Syrian tetrapolis, Mesopotamia, and Persia.

Seleukos, Antiochos, and Apollo: the

creation of a divine genealogy

One of the longest-lasting of the royal court's efforts to legitimate Antiochos' rule was the creation of a divine genealogy for his father and thus his family, a process that had already begun by the battle of Ipsos in 301 but which did not take its final form until the end of Seleukos' life. This important familial connection and the importance of his father were reinforced by both his continuation of the regnal years of his father rather than beginning his own and also by initiating a cult devoted to Seleukos in Seleukeia-in-Pieria. In this process Antiochos replaced Alexander with Seleukos as the founder of the empire and presented his rule as familial and sanctioned by Apollo.

While the legend of Seleukos' birth from Apollo was well known in antiquity⁸ and has been discussed in terms of its impact in legitimising Seleukid rule, the underlying causes of the shift have not yet been examined nor have they been explicitly discussed in relation to the divinity of the Seleukid kings. I argue that beginning during the period of Antiochos' joint rule with his father it was necessary for him to bolster his claims to legitimacy and that Antiochos' personal relationship to Apollo, in addition to regional factors, defined the form of Seleukid legitimacy.

There are few fixed chronological indicators for the creation of the myth of Seleukos' birth from Apollo. Justin and perhaps Appian provide some literary references, with the fullest version preserved by the former. In his version Seleukos received an anchor birthmark and an anchor signet ring from his mother. As Ogden points out and as discussed in the previous chapter, this story mirrors many of the features of the birth myths of Alexander as well as of Augustus.⁹

Seleukos' valour also was distinguished, and his origin was miraculous. His mother Laodike, it seems, after she had been married to Antiochos, a distinguished general of Philip's, dreamed that she conceived by sleeping with Apollo, and that, having been made pregnant, she was given a ring by the god as a reward for the sex, its stone was engraved with an anchor. Apollo bade her give it to the son she was to bear. The discovery of a ring with the same engraving in the bed the next day made it clear that the vision had been miraculous, as did the appearance of the sign of the anchor on the thigh of the little Seleukos himself. Therefore, Laodike gave the ring to Seleukos when he was setting out on the Persian campaign with Alexander the Great, and she told him about his origin.¹⁰

–Justin 15.4.2–7

Justin's version of the myth can be broken down into two distinct parts; namely an aetiological explanation of the importance of the anchor as a Seleukid symbol and the story of the divine birth from Apollo. Justin's (or Trogus') version of the myth is unique in combining these elements. Both the

birth from Apollo¹¹ and the significance of the anchor as a signet ring¹² appear as separate stories elsewhere. Given its prominence in both Seleukid iconography and in the Justin version, the relationship between it and the Apollo imagery is illuminating. The anchor is prominent on Seleukos I's coinage from very early in his reign¹³ (Figures 2.1 and 2.2) and the coinage which features Apollo does not appear until at least ten years after the first appearance of the anchor. So it seems evident that the anchor had independent significance as a Seleukid symbol apart from being simple Apolline imagery.

If we conclude that the combination of the anchor and Apolline origin were a late creation, we need to re-examine the evidence for the first appearance of the Apollo myth. There have been two dates proposed, either after the battle of Ipsos in 301 or shortly after the death of Seleukos I in 281. Hadley argues that most of the prophetic *logoi* concerning Seleukos found in Diodoros and Appian date to immediately before or shortly after Ipsos as they are derived from the history of Hieronymos of Kardia.¹⁴ He also, I believe incorrectly, dates the versions of the signet ring myth in Justin and Appian to this period. The epigraphic evidence suggests that we should date the introduction of the connection slightly later. In 287, 14 years after Ipsos, Seleukos sent a delegation with a donation to Apollo at Didyma and did not refer to the god as either a kinsman or an ancestor.¹⁵ This strongly suggests that the Seleukid birth myth was not in public discourse by that date. Based on a decree from Ilion, Hadley had also argued that the dissemination of the myth must have occurred by 278,¹⁶ though we now date the document to 276 or 275 BC.¹⁷ However, the recent discovery of an inscription from Aigai may help further refine this dating to around 281.¹⁸ Additionally, there is a hymn from Erythrai which names Seleukos as the son of Apollo.¹⁹ This hymn is traditionally dated between 280 and 274. Since the Aigai inscription provides a suggestion that the myth may have been in use by 281, the earlier dates suggested for the hymn are also possible.²⁰ Thus we should date the propagation of the myth as between 287 and 276, while keeping the option of the emergence of the myth by 281 open.



Figure 2.1 Silver tetradrachm, Ekbatana, Seleukos I: Herakles/Zeus Aetophoros. Yale University Art Gallery. 2001.87.11925



Figure 2.2 Silver tetradrachm, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, Seleukos I: Zeus/Athena Promachos in a quadriga drawn by horned elephants. CNG online auction 110, Lot: 60. www.cngcoins.com

The emergence of the Apolline descent of Seleukos sometime in the mid-280s to early 270s is nearly contemporary with a minor shift in coinage types in the areas under the control of Antiochos I. In 294, Seleukos shared his kingdom with his son, with Seleukos as king in the West and Antiochos as king in the East.²¹ While there is no direct indication of how much actual authority was yielded to Antiochos, it appears from Antiochos' activities that he did act as king in the East, taking over the usual royal prerogatives including founding cities in his own name.²² Because of Antiochos' exercise of control in the region, I believe that we can assign the variation in the design of some of the coinage in the eastern part of the empire to the impetus of the court around Antiochos rather than the court around Seleukos.²³



Figure 2.3 Gold stater, Susa, Seleukos I/Antiochos I: Apollo/Artemis in an elephant *biga*. Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 163.

Collection of Arthur Houghton

To place this coinage in context a brief review of Seleukos' coinage is necessary. As we have seen, for the most part, Seleukos continued the Herakles/Zeus type minted by Alexander. Compared to the coins minted by subsequent Seleukid monarchs until the reign of Antiochos IV, Apollo imagery is very rare on Seleukos' coinage. Only a small percentage of coin types (approximately < 3%) bore Apollo imagery. Even this small percentage may overstate the prominence of Apollo imagery for Seleukos, as images related to Apollo were most commonly found on low-value bronze coinage. Furthermore, Seleukos was the only Seleukid king before Antiochos V who did not issue silver coinage with the image of Apollo. The production of Apollo imagery during his reign was limited to five mints: bronze coinage at Antioch, a Babylonian mint and the 'native' or 'satrapal' workshop at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris²⁴, and gold coinage at Susa and a mint in Baktria.²⁵ The two gold types are unique for the reign of Seleukos I and have been dated to c. 287.²⁶ These feature an obverse with the laureate head of Apollo facing right and a reverse with Artemis in an elephant *biga* facing left with the legend of King Seleukos²⁷ (Figure 2.3 and Figure 2.4). Both of these types were minted in the eastern satrapies during the period of joint rule and should therefore properly be assigned to the impetus of Antiochos I. Kritt ties the issuing of these coins to Antiochos' movement between the mints of Susa and Baktria.²⁸ The only potential caveat in assigning this coinage to the impetus of Antiochos I is the appearance of his father's name on the coinage. However, this is not as problematic as it appears, as the majority of the mints in the region under Antiochos' control issued coinage with the legend in the name of Seleukos, with only the mints at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, Ekbatana, and Drangiane and/

or western Arachosia deviating from the pattern.²⁹ Additionally, a letter that Seleukos I sent to Miletos during this period named only Seleukos, while the covering letter named both kings.³⁰ This suggests that it was often sufficient to use the name of the elder king to represent both kings and only in specific circumstances were both names necessary.



Figure 2.4 Gold stater, Baktrian Mint, Seleukos I/Antiochos I: Apollo/Artemis in an elephant *bige*. Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 257.

Collection of Arthur Houghton

The reverse image of Artemis in an elephant *bige* on this coinage is within the same iconographic range as a variety of other coinage issued by Seleukos I celebrating the success of his famous war elephants. The appearance of Artemis is explained by the image of her brother Apollo on the obverse as she appears nowhere else on the coinage of Seleukos I. This may have been intended to suggest a link between Stratonike (the former step-mother and then wife of Antiochos) and Artemis and Antiochos and Apollo, since a set of similar relationships between Antiochos and Nabû and Stratonike and Astarte have been identified by Kosmin in the Borsippa cylinder.³¹ Given the high value of these coins, the use of Apollo on the obverse had special significance and they were minted for a commemorative purpose. It is unclear what the specific purpose was, as these coins may have commemorated Antiochos' and Stratonike's entry into the satrapy, a specific dedication to Apollo, or some unknown event worthy of memorialisation in the East. It is also possible that the entrance of Antiochos and Stratonike into the satrapy nearly coincided with the introduction of the Apolline birth myth and that these coins commemorate that event in the East.³²

While the gold staters were intended for broad circulation within the empire, this was not the case with the other Apollo coinage of Seleukos I.³³

Three mints produced bronze coinage with Apollo during Seleukos' lifetime: Antioch, a Babylonian mint, and the subsidiary mint at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris. Thus, the production of these Apollo types was limited to two regions, Babylonia and Antioch. Both these areas have a special connection with Apollo, Babylonia through the god Nabû and Antioch through the sanctuary of Daphne.³⁴ The mint where this coinage was produced suggests a strong local connection for the generation of the type, as is expected with most bronze coinage since it was the form of coinage used in everyday commerce in a local region.³⁵ What is more significant is that these are the same regions where it appears that Antiochos and Seleukos most actively exploited the possibilities of a connection with Apollo. The production of the coinage in Babylon clearly represents the links between local and royal imagery. The earliest date for the Apollo types in Babylonia is in the late 290s.³⁶ These coins were therefore produced shortly before or at the accession of Antiochos I to the position of joint monarch in 294.³⁷ If these Babylonian coins were produced in conjunction with Antiochos I's accession to the position of crown prince in Babylon or his arrival there on his way eastwards,³⁸ then it would appear that very early in his career Antiochos' movements were connected with the production of Apolline coinage.

The only Apollo coins that were undoubtedly produced by Seleukos I before his son became joint ruler were produced in Antioch. On account of the fact that these are bronze coins and therefore had a limited regional circulation, they are more likely to have had their origin in local events. As the foundation of the city of Antioch on 22 Artemisios 301/300³⁹ may have coincided with the dedication of the grove at Daphne to Apollo in the outskirts of the new city,⁴⁰ it would have provided a strong impetus for the creation of an Apollo-type coin to coincide with the foundation.⁴¹ The Apollo coinage therefore can be associated with the link between the temple foundation and the city foundation. A parallel for depicting events of local significance on bronze coinage can be found in some of the coinage minted at Seleukeia-in-Pieria.⁴² That city issued bronze coins with the obverse of the laureate head of Zeus and the reverse of a lightning bolt (sometimes winged). The foundation story of that city, which is preserved in Appian, recounts that a lightning strike portended the foundation of the city and that Seleukos consecrated lightning as the divinity of the city.⁴³

Despite the date of the founding of Antioch, it may still be possible to link this coinage to the Apollo connections of Antiochos I. The majority of the ancient sources state that Seleukos I named the city of Antioch after his father Antiochos, but several other texts state that the city was named for his son Antiochos.⁴⁴ While naming the city for his father may be more likely, it is not impossible that the city was named both for his father and his son,

highlighting the familial connection and continuity. If this is the case, a further argument can be made linking Apollo and Antiochos. Additionally, in the cult document from Seleukeia-in-Pieria from the reign of Seleukos IV, Antiochos is given the title Antiochos Apollo Soter.⁴⁵ The association between the two at Antioch also may partially explain Antiochos' interest in the god during and after his rise to the position of joint monarch. As this speculation is difficult to prove, it remains easier to connect this coinage to the foundation of the city rather than the introduction of the Apolline ancestry on coinage.

Antiochos continued to develop close ties with Apollo and introduced a significant change into Seleukid coinage by introducing the Apollo-on-the-omphalos type coinage (Figure 2.5).



Figure 2.5 Silver tetradrachm, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, Antiochos I: Antiochos I/Apollo-on-the-omphalos. Yale University Art Gallery. Ruth Elizabeth White Fund. 2004.6.266



Figure 2.6 Silver tetradrachm, Sardis, Antiochos I: Deified Seleukos I/Apollo-on-the-omphalos. With permission of wildwinds.com, ex Freeman & Sear Mail Bid Sale 11, lot 142

The mint at which this coinage was first introduced is controversial. The

general consensus had been that the type was first introduced paired with a deified portrait of his father on the obverse at Sardis when he returned westward in order to deal with the revolts that sprang up in the wake of his father's death.⁴⁶ Iossif has convincingly argued that the introduction of the coinage took place both earlier (in 279) and further east at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris.⁴⁷ Assuming that the coinage was introduced at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris and moved outwards towards the periphery, this makes the pairing of the divine portrait of Seleukos obverse and Apollo reverse introduced at Sardis in 276 a more significant representation of the developing familial link between the two (Figure 2.6). With the issuing of this coin type, the familial link must have already been established and would have allowed Antiochos to link the deification of his father to the power of the familial god.

At first glance, the most notable feature of the Apollo coinage of Antiochos I is that Apollo appears as a normal Greek deity, without any hint of oriental influence. The image of Apollo that was created by Antiochos I for his silver tetradrachms has several defining features. Firstly, he is always seated, either on an omphalos or on a tripod. Both of these recall the oracular power of Apollo. While the tripod is a clear symbol of Apollo's oracle, the symbolism of the omphalos is less clear. Babelon's suggestion that the omphalos represents the omphalos at the meeting of Antioch's four corners should be rejected largely because it does not appear to have had the same importance as in the heart of the Seleukid empire under Antiochos I as it did later, nor did the omphalos imagery originate there.⁴⁸ The omphalos probably represents a generic omphalos stone which allowed connections to the divine, rather than either the Pythian omphalos or the one at Antioch. Both of these are features of the established Greek image of Apollo and do not seem to have any non-Greek influences. Interestingly, however, this particular image of Apollo seated on the omphalos holding either a bow or an arrow does not occur previously and may have represented a new cult image created for the Seleukids.⁴⁹

The second feature of Apollo in all of the silver tetradrachms of Antiochos I is the bow and arrow(s). These are held by Apollo in two poses. The nude Apollo holds a bow in his outstretched hand (Figure 2.6), while the clothed Apollo holds arrow(s) while resting his other hand on the bow (Figure 2.5). The difference between the two images is minor, but since the difference between the poses of nude Apollo and of clothed Apollo seems to be consistent across Seleukid coinage, this suggests that there is a deliberate attempt to differentiate between the two images. The difference may be a part of an attempt to make the image more acceptable to an audience unaccustomed to the representation of the male nude figure.⁵⁰ The association between Apollo and archery is well known,⁵¹ and therefore it is completely unsurprising that Apollo is suitably armed. While Apollo is normally associated with the bow and arrow(s), they

are not exclusively Greek weapons, and are equally associated with Persian archers, as well as Assyrian and Babylonian gods.⁵² However, the common depiction of Apollo as an archer forces us to tie this image with the conventional Greek conception of Apollo.

Thus far we have detailed two main reasons for associating the introduction of Apollo as the Seleukid ancestor with Antiochos I rather than Seleukos I. The first is that the Seleukid association with Apollo did not begin until Antiochos was co-regent or at least a significant figure in the house and it began in areas under his suzerainty and in other prominent Apollo sanctuaries. The second is that the standard Seleukid image of Apollo was created and essentially standardised during his reign. There is yet a third reason. In the priest list from Seleukeia-in-Pieria from 187–175 BC (the reign of Seleukos IV), the priest for the king was designated the priest of Antiochos Apollo Soter whereas the one for Seleukos was for Seleukos Zeus Nikator.⁵³ This suggests that while Seleukos may have been viewed as the son of Apollo,⁵⁴ it was his son that was most closely associated with the god. This priest list is the first appearance of the cult titles for the Seleukid kings. While the evidence for a centrally organised cult of the living monarch does not appear before the reign of Antiochos III, it is likely that these cult titles were assigned within the king's lifetime or shortly after his death. It is unsurprising given the interest that both Seleukos I and Antiochos I had in the cultivation of divine favour that they were the only two deified Seleukid kings to be associated with a specific god in the priest list. Seleukos I's cult title in this list, Seleukos Zeus Nikator, appears to be a logical extension of his association with Zeus which was richly embodied both on his coinage and in his propaganda. The importance of this association for the Seleukid legend is demonstrated by the continued association of Seleukos and Zeus in Roman Dura-Europos.⁵⁵ Therefore, it seems logical to suggest that the title for Antiochos, Antiochos Apollo Soter, was an extension of Antiochos' self-presentation associating himself and his family with the god.

We now turn to four large regions in the empire – Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Persia – and examine how the image of Apollo on the omphalos may have enhanced the legitimacy of Antiochos in each of these regions, and how this symbol may provide part of the explanation for the introduction of Apollo as the Seleukid ancestor. We will begin where Antiochos minted the important Apollo on the omphalos coinage and move counter-chronologically through Antiochos I's activities, beginning with his activities in Asia Minor, moving south to the Syrian tetrapolis and then eastwards through Mesopotamia and into Persia.

Apollo, Asia Minor and the Seleukids

While the interest in Apollo shown by Antiochos I and his father was not isolated to a single region, their interest can be most clearly seen in the cities of Asia Minor. In traditional scholarship, the prominent Seleukid focus on Apollo in Asia Minor has been explained by citing the long-standing importance of Apollo in Asia Minor where it was tied to Miletos and the major Apollo sanctuary of Didyma.⁵⁶

Apollo has been called the ‘most Greek of the all gods’,⁵⁷ but his origins are more complex particularly in Asia Minor.⁵⁸ Burkert has sketched the various divine strands which merged into Apollo by the seventh century, when his cult was already widespread.⁵⁹ After questioning the attribution of one of the god’s epithets, Lykeios with Lykia, he identifies three major regions important for the development of Apollo: Dorian, northwest Greece, Cretan-Minoan, and Syrio-Hittite.⁶⁰ While, with some small reservations,⁶¹ Burkert’s outline of Apollo’s origin has been generally accepted, it is clear that for the third-century Graeco-Macedonians, Apollo had long-established ties in Asia Minor and Lykia in particular.⁶² This connection with Asia Minor was present already in the *Iliad* where Apollo is particularly favourable to Lykian heroes,⁶³ a god well established in the Troad, and hostile to the Greeks. This connection to Asia Minor continues in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* where he is linked not only to Lykia but also to Maeonia and Miletos.⁶⁴ He is further linked to the region by Bacchylides,⁶⁵ Sophocles,⁶⁶ and in the *Rhesus*.⁶⁷ There was thus a clear literary tradition that linked the god to Asia Minor that long predated the Seleukids.

Adding to the literary record, the historical tradition likewise presents a strong connection between Apollo and Asia Minor. In particular the pan-hellenic shrine at Delphi received a large number of dedications from Asia Minor, the best known from the Lydian dynast Kroisos.⁶⁸

In addition to the literary and historical traditions that would have been readily available to Seleukos and Antiochos and which emphasised the importance of Apollo to Asia Minor, there were also a large number of sanctuaries to the god already extant. These sanctuaries fall into two broad categories, first there were the series of Apolline oracles up and down the coast: Mallos and Mopsuestia in Kilikia, Patara in Lykia, Karian Telmessos, Klaros, Gryneion, Zeleia, and most famously Didyma.⁶⁹ Furthermore, we should include Seleukos’ foundation of the shrine at Daphne in Syria to this collection of oracular sites.⁷⁰ The other category comprises the large number of sanctuaries dedicated to Apollo but without a known oracle.⁷¹ Both types of sanctuaries were available to receive dedications from Seleukos and Antiochos,

Seleukos outlined his general policy of favourability towards the Greek sanctuaries in Asia Minor in a letter to Nysa:

[For our policy is always] through benefactions [to please] the citizens [of the Greek cities and] with reverence to join in increasing [the honours] of the gods, [so that we may be the object of good-will] transmissible for all time [to those who come after] us.⁷²

As evidenced by this inscription this policy did not only apply to Apollo sanctuaries, but was rather a general policy.⁷³ Nevertheless, Apollo sanctuaries seem to have received a significant degree of attention. The newly published inscription from Aigai which details the cult of Seleukos and Antiochos in the city may be typical of the attention paid to Apollo sanctuaries elsewhere in the empire.⁷⁴ Much better known are the lavish dedications of the early Seleukid house to the major sanctuary at Didyma and its city Miletos.

The sanctuary of Apollo at Didyma was one of the more renowned Apollo sanctuaries in the Greek world beginning in the Archaic period.⁷⁵ Like other oracular shrines it had received dedications from Greeks and non-Greeks alike,⁷⁶ which helped to spread its reputation. From the Archaic period the sanctuary was in control of a priestly family who controlled the oracular function of the shire, this family was so closely associated with the oracle that it was often referred to as the Branchidae.⁷⁷ When the city of Miletos became involved in the revolt from Persia and was sacked by the Persian king in 494, the sanctuary was also looted and the cult statue carried off, simultaneously and not coincidentally the oracle also fell silent.⁷⁸ Nevertheless the cult continued to function, but without the oracle.⁷⁹ Shortly after Alexander had removed Miletos from Persian control, the oracle once again began to function,⁸⁰ and delivered oracles for Alexander.⁸¹ According to the Alexander historians, the Branchidae who had been accused of treason by the Milesians had been resettled in Persia by the Great King. When Alexander discovered their descendants, he slaughtered the last remnants of the tribe,⁸² and control of the oracle passed to the city of Miletos.⁸³ Although the oracle had resumed prophesising under Alexander, the rebuilding of the temple did not begin until the Seleukids began to patronise the sanctuary.⁸⁴

Despite lacking a political foothold in Asia Minor until after the battle of Korupedion (281 BC), the immediate family of Seleukos I (that is the king, his wife Apama, and his son Antiochos I) took a strong interest in the temple at Didyma from an early period.⁸⁵ The first epigraphically attested dedication to the temple is the grant of a stoa and its revenues for the construction of the temple, given by Antiochos (I) in c. 300.⁸⁶ Following this grant, Apama also bestowed benefactions on the Milesians.⁸⁷ Besides clearly demonstrating an interest in the most important Apollo sanctuary in Asia Minor, and providing funds for the rebuilding of the temple, these two sets of benefactions reveal

several significant elements in early Seleukid policy. The first, and perhaps most important, was the constant promotion and reaffirmation of the immediate royal family as benefactors. In both inscriptions, familial roles are clearly outlined with Antiochos repeatedly named as the eldest son of the king,⁸⁸ and Apama as wife of Seleukos.⁸⁹ The promotion of this family unit in Didyma may also be seen in the naming of the Syrian tetrapolis which contained similar dynastic references. Furthermore, both inscriptions refer to prior benefactions provided to the city and temple by Seleukos. Thus, Miletos can be seen to have been patronised by all of the significant people in the Seleukid house.

This inscription also sheds light on one reason Miletos was of significant interest to the Seleukids. The proposer of the decree for Antiochos was Demodamas, son of Aristides.⁹⁰ This same Demodamas also proposed the decree for Apama.⁹¹ This Demodamas has been identified as the general of King Seleukos and Antiochos mentioned in Pliny.⁹² As L. Robert has shown, the naming formula for Antiochos in both inscriptions clearly placed their proposal to a date before Antiochos had been elevated to the position of joint ruler in 294.⁹³ If the identification of this Demodamas is correct, then it may help to shed some light on Antiochos' position in the court prior to Ipsos. In that battle, he was in charge of the cavalry which through its defeat led Demetrios away from the battlefield and prevented him from aiding his father.⁹⁴ Prior to the battle, little is known about his activities, but from this inscription we can infer an active role for him on the campaigns with Demodamas. By combining the passage from Pliny and the inscription for Antiochos we can suggest that the campaign, on which Antiochos became familiar with the Milesians, was Seleukos' military enterprise in the Upper Satrapies. The location of this activity is reinforced by the Apama and Demodamas connection. In the decree he proposed to the Milesians, she is thanked for her benefactions to citizens of Miletos who served in the Seleukid army.⁹⁵ Apama's home territory was the area in which she would have been able to provide the most support to her husband's army. On account of the very prominent role that Demodamas played in proposing decrees from Antiochos and Apama, he may have been the leader of the Milesian troops. This campaign was likely the one in which he established altars to his city's god, Didymean Apollo, at the furthest reaches of the empire.⁹⁶ It seems likely that Seleukos may have used this campaign as an opportunity to introduce his oldest son, Antiochos, to the military life of a Macedonian prince. The development of the interaction between the king's family and Demodamas was significant for both parties; Demodamas was to eventually receive important donations for his home city and temple from the king. Outside of the important military support provided by individual Milesians, the benefits for Antiochos are unclear; nevertheless,

his developing interest in Apollo may have been influenced by the Milesian's respect for his local deity.

Another important aspect of these inscriptions is their reference to earlier benefactions to the city and sanctuary provided by Seleukos I. While this phrase may be part of the normal diplomatic language of benefactions,⁹⁷ we know there is at least one dedication from Seleukos that could be assigned to this period. This is the return of the statue of Apollo taken by the Persians.⁹⁸ Despite the suggestion that the removal of the cult statue was a result of Hellenistic propaganda,⁹⁹ the discovery of a colossal bronze model of a knuckle-bone found in Susa with a dedicatory inscription from two Milesians to Apollo suggests objects from the temple were held there as spoils.¹⁰⁰ This suggests that Seleukos might have had something to return to the sanctuary, even if some cultic elements remained at Susa. A greater problem of interpretation remains as none of the literary sources chronologically fix the return of the statue. The first time that Seleukos would have had control over the statue was at the beginning of his eastern anabasis when he took Susa in c. 312. As his focus in this period appears to be centred on his campaigns in the East, although with an important Milesian contingent, it is possible that the statue remained in Seleukid hands until his return westward for the battle of Ipsos in 301. As both of the epigraphically attested decrees discussed above highlight Seleukos' euergetism, it seems possible that part of these gifts was the return of objects taken when the city and temple had been sacked. As has been pointed out above, there was a large Milesian contingent in the Seleukid army which took part in the campaign to the Upper Satrapies and it seems probable that this group would have been able to identify theoretical spoils in Susa as items taken from their city that Seleukos could return. The return of these items to the sanctuary would have provided the king with the opportunity to exploit his credentials as a friend of the Greek cities of Asia Minor and establish positive relations with the city of Miletos as benefactor.

It seems clear that the dedications by Antiochos and his mother and father to the city of Miletos and the temple at Didyma all occurred in a relatively short time after the time of the battle of Ipsos. These dedications are normally assumed to reflect the early Seleukid interest in Apollo, and the beginning of his role as the ancestor of the Seleukid house. However, this view is slightly problematic at this early stage, as in none of these dedications is there any reference to Apollo as ancestor.¹⁰¹ What these decrees clearly reflect is the entire royal family's interest in rewarding the military service of the Milesians who appear to have been an important part of their forces and for whom Apollo had long been an important deity. But even despite the lack of positive evidence for a clear connection to Apollo as an ancestor at this early stage, there are other indications of the growing significance of Apollo.

In addition to the significant presence of the Milesians in the Seleukid army, Apollo's role as an oracular god who could provide legitimacy for Seleukid power appears to have begun to be exploited roughly in this period. It may have been in this period that Seleukos received the oracles recorded in Appian warning against a return to Europe.¹⁰² Here Seleukos seems to have taken his inspiration from Alexander who was declared a god by the restored oracle.¹⁰³ Perhaps tied to this oracle, although not recorded in Appian but recorded in Libanius, the god at Didyma ordered that Daphne be made sacred to him.¹⁰⁴ Libanius relates this oracle after explaining that Seleukos promoted the sanctuary after finding a golden arrowhead with Phoebus inscribed on it.¹⁰⁵ The founding of this sanctuary next to one of Seleukos' major building projects strongly suggests an interest in the god. Nevertheless, even in the foundation myths for Antioch and his discussions of the Seleukos' ancestry, Libanius does not refer to Seleukos' birth from Apollo. This raises the prospect that the foundation of Antioch and the sanctuary at Daphne predated the familial connection with Apollo. What is clear is that by roughly 300 the Seleukid royal family had begun to show an interest in Apollo sanctuaries. Nonetheless, this interest in the god had not yet taken the form of claiming Apollo as ancestor nor was it yet clear that the close connection between Antiochos and Apollo had developed.

While the particular regard for Miletos may have been the result of Milesians serving in the army, the concurrent developments in the Syrian tetrapolis suggest that the royal interest in Apollo was deeper than simply rewarding Milesian interests both in the new Greek cities in Syria and in Asia Minor. The choice of the names of the cities in the Syrian tetrapolis is revealing in this respect.¹⁰⁶ The evidence from the other major cities founded by Seleukos, in particular Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris,¹⁰⁷ suggests that the most important city of the region would have been Seleukeia-in-Pieria.¹⁰⁸ That conclusion is bolstered by Antiochos' choosing to place the temple to his father in that city.¹⁰⁹ As a result, the major sanctuary of Apollo is not directly connected to his western 'capital'. The importance of the names of family members chosen for the new major Syrian settlements is nevertheless significant.

Therefore, it seems that in the period around Ipsos, Antiochos and his father began to take an interest in Apollo. After this brief flurry of interest in Apollo around 300, there is little evidence of Seleukid patronage of Apollo in the years immediately following. As discussed before, a series of gold and silver coins with the likeness of Apollo may have been issued in conjunction with Antiochos and Stratonike's appointment as joint ruler in charge of the Upper Satrapies in c. 294. The next documented Seleukid dedication to Apollo takes place in 288/7.¹¹⁰ That dedication by Seleukos is recorded in a letter sent to the

Milesians and preserved in the temple inventory lists at the sanctuary.¹¹¹ The letter is dated by a separate covering letter inscribed above it which included the information that it was sent by the 'Kings Seleukos and Antiochos'.¹¹² Welles determined the date of the letter, on the basis of magistrates included in the cover letter, to be 288/7, when the city was under the control of Lysimachos.¹¹³ This letter can be seen as parallel to the earlier Seleukid dedications to the city, which may have been intended to encourage independent Miletos to support the Seleukids.¹¹⁴ The dedication was sent to the temple of Apollo for the 'Saviour Gods'. The initial suggestion that this referred to the two Seleukid kings has been rejected by Welles who argues that the Saviour Gods referred either to the Dioskouroi or to the Cabeiri of Samothrace as he doubted the existence of a cult for the Seleukid kings as saviours at this early point.¹¹⁵ While the Dioskouroi may be the deities behind the Soterai, it seems impossible to entirely rule out a possible connection to a Seleukid ruler cult, although it remains unlikely. As we know, the first two Seleukid kings were honoured as Saviours at various cities in Asia Minor, although most of these cults appear to date to after Seleukos' return to Asia Minor in the late 280s.¹¹⁶

Of the cults for the Soterai the closest parallel may be the honours for Antiochos and his father at Aigai around 281.¹¹⁷ Here, a cult was established for Seleukos and Antiochos as saviours, as well as the dedication of an altar for the Soteira next to the precinct of the temple of Apollo. As we can see from inscriptions at Aigai and Didyma a dedication linked to the kings was made in each sanctuary to the Soteira; in Aigai an altar and in Didyma a wine cooler set. Furthermore, the Saviour God(s) are linked with Apollo in both locations, by the placement of the offerings in his temple. In both cases, there is a marked difference in how Apollo was regarded in contrast to the situation approximately 40 years later when Seleukos II sent another letter to Miletos. In this letter, Seleukos II directly referred to his kinship with the Didymean Apollo.¹¹⁸ Since the dedication was sent to the temple of Apollo at Didyma, these Saviour Gods must somehow be related to the temple of Apollo and the kings are not the only option. As dedications to the Saviour Gods were normal after the survival of a peril at sea, some unknown naval context may be implied, in this case the Dioskouroi would be a logical option. Furthermore, as there was a cult of Zeus Soter at Didyma it is possible that the plural Soterai referred to dedications to both Zeus and Apollo as Soterai. A final option would be the brother-sister pair, Apollo and Artemis.

Regardless of what divine beings were referred to by the Soterai dedication, what seems clear from Seleukos' dedication to Didyma, in 288/7, is that he had not yet overtly claimed Apollo as an ancestor and therefore the origin of the Seleukid Apolline lineage must postdate the inscription. The date of this letter

from Seleukos becomes even more interesting in light of the minting of the gold Apollo-Artemis staters in c. 288/7, also discussed above. If we include the bronze coins, excluding those from Antioch, which also appear to have been issued in these years, there suddenly was a surprising amount of activity concerning Apollo in this short period. While we have shown that the coinage in the eastern part of the empire during this period should logically be connected with Antiochos, it seems unlikely that Antiochos began to promote a familial connection to Apollo without the consent or at least acknowledgement of his father while they were both kings. In c. 288/7, the picture of how the Seleukid claim to Apolline ancestry developed can be seen a bit more clearly. It appears that Seleukid propaganda was not consistent in the areas under the control of the different kings. This appears to be the result of differing cultural regions and the interests of the different kings. In the West, the interest in Apollo Didymaios, which had been evident from the first Seleukid foray to the west at Ipsos, reasserted itself in terms of a large dedication to the god, although the dedication there does not contain any evidence for a claim that Apollo was an ancestor of the king. In the East, the evidence from coins suggests that Antiochos was beginning to promote close links to the god for himself, and it appears that these links subsequently developed into the claim that Apollo was the father of Seleukos and the founder of the dynasty which spread westward.

Given how poorly the activities of the joint Seleukid kings are known in the period following the dedication to Didyma and before the battle of Korupedion, it is unsurprising that we do not see evidence for the methods which the kings used to promote their familial connection to Apollo. During this period, the Seleukids for the most part were operating outside of areas in which the later Graeco-Roman authors were most interested and outside of areas with strong epigraphic habits so little evidence of their activities has emerged. After Seleukos' victory at Korupedion, the situation changed; for the first time the Seleukids were in constant direct contact with the Greek cities of Asia Minor, and Apollo may have begun to have been referred to as the ancestor of the Seleukid house. Within a decade of the victory, two cities in Asia Minor, Ilion and Erythrai, proclaimed honours for Seleukos with reference to Apollo as his father or ancestor. A third city may have implied the connection shortly after Korupedion, as in Aigai the cults for the kings were strongly affiliated with the temple and rituals established for Apollo in that city.

It is useful here to highlight the connections between the kings and Apollo; the temple is to be established next to that of Apollo; the hecatomb sacrifice of bulls was to be done as the sacrifice for Apollo was done; in the month renamed for a Seleukos another bull was sacrificed as was done for Apollo.¹¹⁹

While this does not prove a familial connection between the kings and the god, it suggests a close association between the two. It would be interesting to know what was included in the paean that was sung over the offerings. Perhaps, if one could speculate, it was similar to the honour recorded in the sanctuary of Asklepios at Erythrai. There readers were instructed to ‘hymn Seleukos son of dark-haired Apollo, during the libations, whom the player of the golden lyre himself begot’.¹²⁰ This hymn is typically dated to around 274.¹²¹ These honours were fairly typical for the incorporation of royal figures into civic cults,¹²² and are very similar to the honours awarded Seleukos at Ilion. There the honours included an altar where annual sacrifices were to be made by the gymnasiarch, the naming of a month after Seleukos, and a ‘crowned’ festival with music, athletic, and horse racing events ‘as is done at the games of Apollo who is the founder of the dynasty’.¹²³ This last phrase is problematic as the exact nature of Seleukos’ and Apollo’s relationship is not defined. The interpretation of this phrase has often hinged on how the word γένους should be translated; normally it is translated as house, race, or clan. It seems clear from the context that it refers to the Seleukid house and therefore dynasty. The use of γένους has been taken to suggest the existence of a multi-generation family, as the use of the term in the first generation would be somewhat surprising, although it is not unparalleled.¹²⁴ This conclusion has led some scholars to date the Ilion decree to Seleukos II rather than to Seleukos I.¹²⁵ However as discussed above, the evidence dictates that this decree should be dated closer to 281.¹²⁶ These honours demonstrate that between 288/7 and Antiochos’ return to Asia Minor in the 270s, a change had taken place and that when cities chose to honour Seleukos they could do so by reflecting his claim that he was the son of Apollo.¹²⁷

While it is impossible to precisely pinpoint when the idea of Apollo as divine ancestor was first introduced, it was first established well after Antiochos I became joint ruler of the empire in 294 and possibly only when Antiochos was the elder king. What also developed from a close examination of the evidence for the connection between Seleukos and Apollo in Asia Minor is that while the Seleukid connection to Miletos focused royal attention on Apollo, it did not include an express assertion of Apollo as a Seleukid ancestor. In none of the dedications to the city or honorary decrees is any mention made of Apollo as ancestor. If one were to consider the political independence of Miletos and significance of both Miletos and Didyma as one motivation for the Seleukids to proclaim a close connection with the god, it would be surprising that Miletos did not attempt to use this developing relationship to extract further benefactions from the Seleukids.¹²⁸ We should therefore conclude that the Milesians, and thus connections with Didyma, were not the driving factor in the creation of the Seleukid Apolline mythology. Furthermore, Apollo did

not emerge as the Seleukid ancestor until about a decade after the first sustained Seleukid patronage of the city. Regardless of whether or not Apollo was already claimed as a Seleukid ancestor, the significance of Apollo for the Greeks and for the Greek cities of Asia Minor in particular may have influenced the Seleukids to promote this god as a patron in that region. As the rest of this chapter will explore, we need not limit Seleukid connections with Apollo to Asia Minor, as Apollo also had resonances within other cultural groups in the empire which provided additional incentives for the Seleukids to tie their dynasty to the god.

Apollo and the Syrian tetrapolis

As the previous sections have shown, while the Seleukids had a strong interest in Miletos and Didyma, this does not appear to have directly led to the Seleukid adoption of Apollo as the ancestor of the house. Rather in order to explain this adoption we need to look to other areas where Apollo also played an important role in developing Seleukid propaganda.

The next region that is considered fundamental to the Seleukid house is the Syrian tetrapolis. The perception of the dynasty as Syrian has a long history,¹²⁹ but this view has now rightfully fallen out of fashion as too confining. Nonetheless, it is important to examine the role Apollo may have played in Syria while explaining his emergence in the Seleukid house.

The Seleukid settlement of Northern Syria represents one of the most intensive areas of Greek colonisation in the Seleukid empire, featuring the foundation of four new cities to replace Antigonos' foundation. One of the impetuses for the creation of these settlements was to draw Greek or Macedonian settlers to the region and to provide the Seleukids with a major source of Graeco-Macedonian manpower.¹³⁰ The quadruple foundation was also important for establishing a dynastic identity which became readily apparent through the names given to the foundations. The city that was likely intended to be the most prominent was the coastal settlement of Seleukeia-in-Pieria, with the city named after Seleukos himself.¹³¹ This practice was repeated at the other major cities founded by Seleukos, in particular Seleukeia-on-the Tigris.¹³² The importance of Seleukeia-in-Pieria is bolstered by Antiochos' choosing to place the temple to his father in that city.¹³³ As a result, the major sanctuary of Apollo in the region was not directly connected to his western 'capital'. However, the deliberate ambiguity of which family member the city is named after is surely significant. The cities of the tetrapolis are

normally thought to have been named after the royal family: Seleukos, his wife Apama, his mother Laodike, and his father Antiochos.¹³⁴ While identifying the name with this family unit is undoubtedly correct, Malalas states that Seleukos named Antioch after his son, and Laodikea after his daughter.¹³⁵ While the existence of this Laodike has been questioned,¹³⁶ it is in line with other Hellenistic practices to name cities after wives or mothers.¹³⁷ The careful definition of the royal family at Miletos, discussed above, may suggest that Antioch was named both for Seleukos' father and son.

In the early history of Seleukid numismatics, Babelon suggested that the omphalos on which Apollo sat was the stone found at the meeting of Antioch's four corners.¹³⁸ While this interpretation has been widely rejected, it is still useful to look at the evidence for the connections between Apollo and the Syrian tetrapolis. As Apollo was often linked to foundations of cities,¹³⁹ and the Seleukids based their lineage to Apollo on a claim that originated in links with these cities, then it could be argued that Apollo would have appeared to sanction the colonisation of the region. However, this is not the case. Rather, Apollo is notably absent in the foundation stories which we have for these cities, instead it is Zeus who spurs the foundations.¹⁴⁰ This does not mean that Apollo was entirely absent from the process of foundation in Syria. Where Apollo most prominently features is in the foundation of his own shrine at Daphne, located outside of Antioch. As with most foundations, the accounts of the origin of the sanctuary differ. According to Malalas, Daphne was established by Herakles and originally named for himself. Downey argues that the Herakleia was originally distinct from Daphne and only as the two expanded did their mythological foundations merge.¹⁴¹ On the other hand, Libanius regarded Seleukos I as the founder of Daphne.¹⁴² Let us examine the foundation story found in Libanius. The foundation is linked to the story of Apollo and Daphne, where he pursued the nymph until she became a tree.¹⁴³ According to Libanius, when Seleukos went out for a hunt he came upon the tree that once was Daphne where his horse dug up a golden arrowhead inscribed with the name of Phoebus.¹⁴⁴ There Seleukos founded a new shrine to the god. Not only did the arrowhead spur the creation of his shrine, but according to Libanius, he was reminded of an oracle from Apollo at Didyma to make Daphne sacred to Apollo.¹⁴⁵ Thus despite Apollo's absence elsewhere, if we rely on Libanius, this sanctuary gave Apollo an important position in Seleukos' new foundations.

The prominence of Apollo in the region was reinforced by some of the bronze coinage produced at Antioch.¹⁴⁶ Houghton and Lorber divide the bronze coins at Antioch-on-the-Orontes into four series: series 1A, 1B, 2, and 3, all of which feature some reference to Apollo. On the Series 1A coins the obverse features the laureate head of Apollo and the reverse features Athena

Promachos in a Corinthian helmet standing right, brandishing a spear and shield with ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ on the left.¹⁴⁷ In Series 1B, the types from Series 1A are used only on the largest denomination, Series 1B denomination B (Figure 2.7).¹⁴⁸ The type of Series 1B denomination C is an obverse of a laureate head of Apollo, with a reverse of a tripod, with ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ on the left.¹⁴⁹ Series 1B denomination D features the obverse of the laureate head of Apollo facing right, with hair rolled behind and a wavy lock behind the ear and falling forward over the shoulder, and another long lock down the back of the neck. The reverse features a tripod with the abbreviated legend ΒΑ on the right and ΣΕ on the left.¹⁵⁰ Series 2–3 are defined by a straight edge and a concave reverse. The obverse features the laureate head of Apollo, and the reverse features a cithara with the abbreviated legend ΒΑ on the right and ΣΕ on the left (Figure 2.8).¹⁵¹



Figure 2.7 Bronze, Antioch, Antiochos I: Apollo/Athena Promachos. Yale University Art Gallery. 2001.87.15375

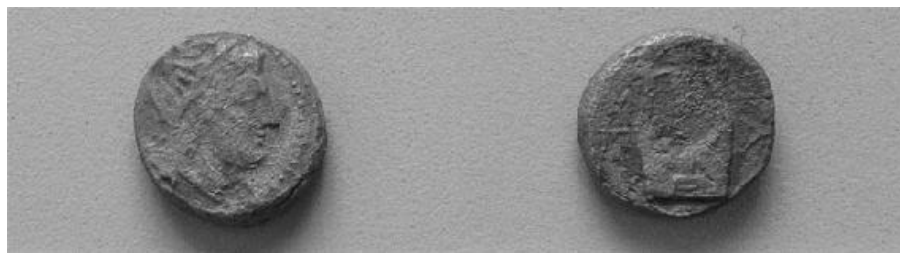


Figure 2.8 Bronze, Antioch, Antiochos I: Apollo/Cithara. Yale University Art Gallery. 1938.6000.1684

The coins of Series 1A and the largest denomination of Series 1B are composed with a different iconographic type than the other coins. These coins feature the reverse of Athena which other scholars connected to the settlers

from Antigoneia at Antioch.¹⁵² This seems unnecessary; Athena was extremely common on the coins of Seleukos I and a prominent deity in Macedonia and elsewhere so her appearance does not prove a connection. The other coin series reflect specific ornaments associated with Apollo. The tripod was the generic symbol of Apollo's oracular power, although Hoover suggests that it may have also had specific association with Apollo at Didyma on account of Seleukos' contemporary return of the Kanachos statue.¹⁵³ Although the tripod is normally associated with Delphi, it still served as a generic symbol of Apollo. Furthermore, the cithara can be specifically associated with Apollo Kitharoidos, and is another common iconographic feature of Apollo. The cithara coins are traditionally linked with the statue of Apollo Kitharoidos set up at Daphne by the Seleukids.¹⁵⁴ The general nature of the Apollo imagery and its specific links to Daphne suggest that this coinage had a local significance more than a direct connection to Didyma.

In comparison with the coinage that emerged under Antiochos I what is notable about the Antioch-on-the-Orontes series is the lack of archery symbolism and the lack of the omphalos. The symbols that are featured, the cithara and the tripod, are more reminiscent of the statue that was said to have been sculpted by Bryaxis for the sanctuary.¹⁵⁵ The statue is described by Libanius¹⁵⁶ as Apollo singing with a cithara in one hand and a golden bowl in the other. The god wore a gilded chiton and his laurel crown. The emphasis on the cithara is therefore found both on the coinage and in the cult statue. It is possible then that the foundation of the temple and the establishment of the cult statue inspired the imagery on the coinage.¹⁵⁷ As Lacroix has convincingly shown, the statue that was produced for Daphne cannot have been the origin of the Apollo which Antiochos I placed on his coinage.¹⁵⁸

It is therefore apparent that while Apollo did appear in coinage minted for the new Syrian tetrapolis, it was a different image than the one that later came to dominate Seleukid coinage. As was the case with Asia Minor, Syria and the Seleukis fail to provide a full picture of the importance of Apollo for the Seleukids. Rather, we must now turn our attention to the lands in which Seleukos first began to establish his own power and where he first assigned his son to command.

The Babylonian policy of Antiochos I

As the previous sections have shown, patronage of Apollo was significant in both the patronage of Miletos and in the foundation of the sanctuary at

Daphne. But Seleukid power was not concentrated only in these two heavily Greek populated areas nor does it seem that the reasons the Seleukids began to promote Apollo as ancestor lay exclusively there either. To get a more complete view of Antiochos' and his father's relationship with Apollo, we must turn our attention elsewhere. In the early Seleukid empire Babylonia formed one of the most important regions for Seleukid power¹⁵⁹ so it would be surprising if they neglected such a vital area in how they portrayed their dynasty.¹⁶⁰ A steadily increasing number of articles and books have revealed the importance of Babylonia to the Seleukids and demonstrated that they did not ignore this valuable source of manpower.¹⁶¹ This relationship between the Babylonians and Seleukids was also exploited through iconography which allowed Antiochos to justify his kingship in traditional Babylonian terms. His patronage of Berossos, or others like him, may have assisted him in his understanding of the local Babylonian customs.¹⁶² Although Berossos' text survives only in fragments and differs from cuneiform texts that have survived, it contains a version of the Creation Epic (the *Enuma Eliš*) which was recited during the Akitu festival as well as at other times of the year.¹⁶³ Assuming that Antiochos functioned as Berossos' patron, then at least the Creation Epic and a narrative of Babylonian history up until his father's reign were available to him for reference and he was thus able to artfully place himself within a Babylonian tradition of kingship.¹⁶⁴ In this section, I will examine the importance of Apollo-Nabû for the king, the connection between Nabû and Antiochos, and the possibility of the king's participation in the Akitu festival.

It appears to have been common practice in the Seleukid empire for the kings to present themselves as the benefactors of local cults. This was certainly true in Babylon where two local gods seem to have been the most prominent: Marduk and Nabû. The reason for a Seleukid king to provide patronage of the god Marduk, the head of the Babylonian pantheon,¹⁶⁵ needs little explanation. However, the god Nabû was more obscure and his prominence under the Seleukids is more surprising, although I will argue that it is tied to his identification with the god Apollo by Antiochos I.¹⁶⁶

During the Neo-Babylonian empire, 626–539 BC, Nabû, a previously insignificant scribal god, was elevated to prominence by increased royal patronage. By the end of the Kassite period, about 1595–1125 BC, he was considered to be Marduk's son. As Zeus, the chief god of the Greek pantheon, was generally associated with Marduk, Zeus' son Apollo could be equated with Nabû. This filial parallel identification may have strongly influenced Antiochos' choice of a deity to patronise in Babylon. By patronising Marduk and Nabû he could present his father, Seleukos I, as connected with or favoured by Zeus/Marduk and himself with and by Apollo/Nabû. Both as a

scribal god and in imitation of his father, Nabû became the god of divine wisdom and was often associated with the tablets of destiny, a divine function which also may have helped the Greeks identify him as the oracular god Apollo. From the Kassite period onwards, he grew in importance, and by the first millennium BC he had become the chief god of Borsippa with his temple, Ezida, replacing his father Marduk as chief god of the city. By the Neo-Babylonian empire (626–539 BC), Nabû was equal in prominence to his father, and celebrated as ‘lord of the gods’ (*bel ili*) and ‘king of the gods of heaven and underworld’ (*lugal dimmerankia*).¹⁶⁷ The equally powerful and related roles of Marduk and Nabû in the Seleukid era are revealed by Antiochos’ emphasis on building the temples of both gods in his Nabû cylinder. This parallels the description of the Babylonian king Marduk-apla-iddina II as ‘worshipper of Nabû and Marduk, worshipper of Esagil and Ezida’.¹⁶⁸ Additionally, in Seleukid-era documents from southern Mesopotamia, Nabû also received the title ‘lord of the universe’.¹⁶⁹ Thus, by the Seleukid era, Nabû was a popular deity throughout Babylonia and western Mesopotamia, even reaching into eastern Syria.¹⁷⁰ It is this regional popularity in the core areas of Seleukid power and the easy transmogrification of Zeus/Apollo to Marduk/Nabû which may have accounted for Antiochos I’s interest in the god.

Another important consideration for Antiochos when deciding to associate himself with a local god may have been the level of prominence of the deity. Here Nabû would have been particularly important owing to his role in the Akitu Festival.¹⁷¹ This festival centred on the Esagila complex in Babylon and occurred on the first to the twelfth of Nisan. Among other things it (re)established the king’s legitimacy in front of the gods.¹⁷² It is difficult for scholars to reconstruct the details of this festival since the longest preserved description of it comes from an incomplete cuneiform text which dates to the reign of Seleukos III.¹⁷³ Although the Hellenistic date of the surviving text is problematic for reconstructing the early history of the festival, it is useful in determining the Seleukid version of the festival.¹⁷⁴ The account clearly shows that Nabû played an important part in the festival. A brief summary of its depiction of Nabû’s and the king’s roles is useful for establishing the significance of the festival for the Seleukid kings. Following four days of prayers and cleansing, on 5 Nisan, more prayers were offered to Bel and then the temple was purified by priests who next left the city not to return until Nabû had returned to Borsippa. That same day Nabû arrived from Borsippa, having been sent by boat the day before. Nabû was greeted by the king who then travelled to the Marduk’s temple alone, where he was stripped of his royal regalia, slapped in the face by the chief priest, and finally gave a negative confession, in which he stated:

I did [not] sin, lord of countries. I was not neglectful (of the requirements) of your godship. [I did not] destroy Babylon; I did not command its overthrow (425) [I did not.] ... the temple Esagila, I did not forget its rites. [I did not] rain blows on the cheek of a subordinate I did [not] humiliate them. [I watched out] for Babylon; I did not smash its walls.¹⁷⁵

Then the priest replied with the god's favour, and the king received his regalia and was again slapped in the face, to obtain an omen. On 6 Nisan the images made by the craftsmen on the second day had their heads cut off by the slaughterer when Nabû arrived at the temple Ehursagtila and then were thrown into a fire started in the presence of Nabû. The images destroyed appeared as follows:

those two images (which the artisans are to make) shall be seven finger(-widths) high. One (shall be made) of cedar, one of tamarisk. Four *dušu*- stones shall be mounted in settings of gold weighing four shekels. [One image] shall hold in its left hand a snake (made) of cedar, raising its right [hand] to the god Nabû. The second (image) shall hold in its [left hand] a scorpion, raising its right hand [to the god] Nabû. They shall be clothed in red garments, [bou]nd in the middle [with] a palm [br]anch.¹⁷⁶

Following the negative confession by the king, the cuneiform tablets break off, the only surviving part remaining from the sixth day of the festival occurs in reference to the statues created on the second day. According to the text, the festival continued with the arrival of more gods on the sixth and seventh days; on the eighth the chief priest offered water to Marduk and sprinkled it on the king and people; the king then 'took Bel by the hand' and led him out into the court and enthroned him in a canopy. Then Marduk was led to the shrine of destinies, where the other gods acknowledged his supremacy, and he pronounced the destinies both in general and for the king. On the ninth day there was a triumphal procession where the king again led Bel by the hand through the city to the festival house, where the statues of the gods were situated, and a banquet was held.

As the extant documents for the ritual date to the period of Seleukid rule, it strongly suggests that they are reflective of the practice during that era, but this does not remove all possible interpretative problems. The lack of description of the pre-Seleukid festival makes it impossible to determine whether the ritual remained unchanged or if Seleukid participation in the ritual changed either its form or function. For the most part scholars agree that the Seleukid-era festival was closely related to the original version and focused on the re-establishment of order in the cosmos and the king by Marduk and the council of gods.¹⁷⁷ The role of Nabû in the festival is unclear, but it must have been significant given the amount of description applied to fetching him from Borsippa and his arrival in Babylon, as well as the destruction of the

statues. Dirven has suggested that the king received his sceptre of kingship from Nabû in Borsippa, and then travelled with him to Babylon, and that this indicates that Nabû acted as the tutelary deity for the king.¹⁷⁸ Antiochos may have been consciously recalling this function of Nabû when rebuilding Nabû's temple and the Marduk temple in Babylon that was importantly associated with the Akitu festival. While no evidence for Antiochos I's involvement in the latter has yet been unearthed, we know from the cunei-form text that the festival was celebrated during the reign of Seleukos III and by Antiochos III in 205.¹⁷⁹ If Antiochos I had participated in this it would have helped to ensure his acceptance by the Babylonian elite and re-enforce Seleukid rule in the area. Given his other interests in Babylon, his royal station, and later Seleukid participation in the festival it seems likely that he would have used the opportunity to establish his legitimacy as king. While there is no concrete evidence that Antiochos took an active part in the Akitu festival, it may have been celebrated either during his time as the joint king while he visited Babylon or later visits when he was sole or senior king, possibly when he returned to oversee the restoration of the Borsippa temples. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that either Seleukos III or Antiochos III,¹⁸⁰ who we know were present at the ceremony, chose to participate in a prominent festival while their ancestors who had stronger connections to the city ignored it.¹⁸¹

The importance of Nabû for the Seleukids as well as his well-established popularity among the Babylonians may explain the continued post-Seleukid connection between Apollo and Nabû which can be seen at Dura, Palmyra, Edessa, and Hierapolis.¹⁸² Further instances of this connection may also be seen in the Parthian period, particularly in the Babylonian region. At the Parthian mint of Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris bronze coinage was issued which Le Rider identifies as the image of Apollo-Nabû.¹⁸³ He describes the image as follows: 'Apollo-Nébo, nu, coiffé d'un *polos*, assis à g. sur un cippe; derrière, posée sur le cippe, une cithare; le dieu tient de la main dr. une grande palme (ou un épi?) ornée d'une bandelette'.¹⁸⁴ This god which McDowell was unable to identify¹⁸⁵ seems to have developed his iconography partially from the Apollo-on-the-omphalos and partially from the Apollo Kitharoidos iconography and strongly suggests that Apollo-Nabû became a viable syncretism as a result of Seleukid intervention.

Although most of the extant evidence for the connection between Apollo and Nabû is from after the end of the Seleukid dynasty, it seems that it represents the continuation of a tradition created during the Seleukid rather than the Parthian or Roman periods. The material evidence which clearly associates these two gods comes mostly from Syria and east, in particular the cities of Dura-Europos (founded by Seleukos I), Palmyra, and Edessa. Scholarly discussion of the two gods is mostly limited to discussions of the temple of

Hierapolis/Bambyce. The final mention of the co-identification of the two gods comes from Strabo when he refers to the gods of the city of Borsippa.¹⁸⁶

One instance of the assimilation between the two deities comes from a small dedicatory statue that was found in the temple of the Gaddê of Dura-Europos. This small statue of a god in a long tunic and mantle, striking a lyre with a plectrum, crowned with a laurel wreath is identified by a Palmyrene inscription as the god Nabû. Although the face of the statue has been broken, it appears to have been bearded. Not only in Dura but in Palmyra as well, a similar figure is identifiable on several tesserae.¹⁸⁷ Differing from the statue at Dura, in the Palmyrene tesserae Nabû lacks a beard, although he is otherwise represented in the oriental style, normally holding a lyre. The representations of Nabû at Palmyra and Dura appear to have been derived from Hellenistic depictions of the god. Possible sources for these images include the Seleukid coins which depict Apollo Kitharoidos and his statue as set up by the Seleukids at Daphne.¹⁸⁸ The beard on the sculpture from Dura may be evidence for his Babylonian origin as a bearded Apollo was uncommon among the Greeks. The only indication of a bearded Apollo comes from Lucian's and Macrobius' descriptions of the statue of Apollo at Hierapolis. Lucian describes the statue as bearded: 'yet these alone show a statue of Apollo bearded'.¹⁸⁹ Macrobius describes the statue in greater detail:

Moreover the Hierapolitians, who are of the Assyrian (Syrian) race, attribute all the effects and virtues of the sun to the one with the bearded face, whom they call Apollo, whose face is figured with a long beard that comes to a point, and on whose head is a projecting calathos. The statue is protected by a breast plate, holds in its right hand an upright spear on the top of which is a small figure of Victory. In its left hand extends the likeness of a flower and from the top of its shoulders its back is wrapped by a gorgonian covering covered with a snake.¹⁹⁰

While this description of the statue seems rather fantastic, it was confirmed by a statue found at Hatra matching the description¹⁹¹ (Figure 2.9).



Figure 2.9 Apollo/Nabû statue, Baghdad Museum (IM 56766). Image courtesy of Erick Bonnier

The clearest literary connection between the two gods is Strabo's statement that Borsippa was a city holy to Artemis and Apollo (Nanaia¹⁹² and Nabû).¹⁹³

The final link between the two gods is that they are used in translations of names containing the theophoric element (usually Nabû/Nebo).¹⁹⁴

Besides the regional importance of Nabû, subsidiary to Marduk, there are a few factors which further support the assimilation of Nabû with Apollo. Both gods are the sons of the head of their respective pantheons and it is possible to attribute oracular functions to both. However, it is unclear if Nabû was an oracular god outside of Hierapolis, where the bearded god Apollo/Nabû gave oracles. If the oracular nature of Nabû was a result of his interaction with Apollo at Hierapolis, it is still possible to deduce an origin for Nabû as an oracular god in Greek terms. As the keeper of the tablets of destiny, Nabû may easily have been confused with the oracular Apollo by Greeks.

A scribal god in origin, despite his rise to prominence and his connections to various kings, he retained many of his scribal attributes in his iconography, he was often represented by a large stylus.¹⁹⁵ Drijvers suggests that the stylus, owing to its size, may have been confused with an arrow or spear, and this 'may have given rise to confusion and to an assimilation of the stylus to the arrow of Apollo, usually borne in the left hand too'.¹⁹⁶ This may have resulted from a deliberate conflation of Apollo and Nabû by Antiochos and subsequent monarchs, which may also account for the early iconographic variance of the number of arrows that Apollo holds being reduced to a single arrow. This ambiguous imagery of arrow as a writing implement may also be present in Libanius' description of Seleukos' escape from Antigonos. In Libanius' account, Demetrios wrote out a message to Seleukos in the sand with the tip of his arrow, warning him of the plot of Antigonos.¹⁹⁷ While this story is fantasy, it is reminiscent of the connection between arrow and stylus of Nabû and may be the distorted result of this symmetry. The usefulness of a god who could be interpreted as Apollo by Graeco-Macedonians and as Nabû by other portions of the population could provide the necessary propaganda for a divinely supported ruler in a form acceptable to both Greek and non-Greek – or at least Babylonian and Mesopotamian – populations. This combined image of Apollo-Nabû may be visible on a clay seal from Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris which depicts a nude figure holding a stylus in the manner of Seleukid Apollo or of Nabû¹⁹⁸ (Figure 2.10). Interestingly, it is not this combination that survives as the most important representation of the combined god in the Parthian period; as we have seen, this is taken up by the other Seleukid representation of Apollo as Kitharoidos. The later preference for this type of Apollo/Nabû may be the result of Parthian appropriation of the seated figure on the omphalos to represent the king.¹⁹⁹

Not only through the ambiguous imagery of Apollo on the omphalos/Nabû did Antiochos I attempt to exploit the familial connections with Apollo and thus Nabû but he also did so explicitly in the foundation cylinder for the

temple of Nabû at Borsippa. This clay foundation cylinder relates Antiochos' role in the refoundation of the temple of Ezida. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt have



Figure 2.10 Clay seal, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris. Archive of the Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e

emphasised the Babylonian context of the cylinder.²⁰⁰ In their translation, the cylinder reads as follows:

Antiochos, the great king, the mighty/legitimate king, king of the world, king of Babylon, king of the lands, caretaker of Esagila and Ezida, first son of Seleukos, the king, the Macedonian, king of Babylon, am I.

When I decided to build Esagila and Ezida, the bricks for Esagila and Ezida I moulded with my pure hands (using) fine quality oil in the land of Hatti and for the laying of the foundation of Esagila and Ezida I brought (them). In the month of Addaru, on the twentieth day, year 43, the foundation of Ezida, the true temple, the house of Nabû which is in Borsippa I did lay.

(O) Nabû, lofty son, wise one of the gods, the proud one, worthy of praise, most noble son of Marduk, offspring of Erua, the queen, who formed mankind, regard (me) joyfully and, at your lofty command which is unchanging, may the overthrow of the countries of my enemies, the achievement of my battle-wishes against my enemies, permanent victories, just kingship, a happy reign, years of joy, children in satiety, be (your) gift for the kingship of Antiochos and Seleukos, the king, his son, forever.

Prince Nabû, son of Esagila, first-born of Marduk, noble child of Erua, the queen, on your entry to Ezida, the true house, the house of your Anu-ship, the dwelling which pleases your heart, with rejoicing and jubilation, may – at your true command which cannot be denied – may my days be long, my years many, my throne firm, my reign long-lasting, under your lofty sceptre which sets the boundary between heaven and earth. May my good fortune be in your pure mouth, may I conquer the countries from sunrise to sunset, may I gather their tribute with my hands and bring (it) for the perfection of Esagila and Ezida.

(O) Nabû, first son, when you enter Ezida, a true house, may favour for Antiochos, king of lands, (and) favour for Seleukos, the king, his son, (and) Stratonike, his consort, the queen, be in your mouth.²⁰¹

In their analysis of the traditional aspects of the cylinder Kuhrt and Sherwin-White rightly emphasise the traditional Babylonian naming formula, which Beaulieu has added a demonstration of the strong correlation between Nabû's and Antiochos' titles.²⁰² Furthermore, the precise ritualistic building programme, the relations between the two temples of Esagila (Marduk) and Ezida (Nabû) and the corollary that Antiochos cannot be ignoring Babylon as he does work at Borsippa,²⁰³ all of which, like his possible participation in the Akitu festival, reinforce the image of him as the proper king of Babylon. They also note that there are several peculiar features that are not related to its Babylonian context, and rather relate to the king himself. The first of these features is the statement that Seleukos is Macedonian. Kuhrt and Sherwin-White point out that the ethnic indicator is not a typical feature of Babylonian inscriptions, but is a feature of Achaimenid inscriptions, and the statement is a remnant of that tradition.²⁰⁴ More interestingly, only Seleukos and not Antiochos is given an ethnic marker.²⁰⁵ While it is perhaps easy to infer that

Antiochos was Macedonian, as his father was, it is noteworthy that the same ethnic is not applied to both father and son. This may be evidence of one part of Antiochos' attempts to represent himself as the legitimate king of all parts of the Seleukid kingdom, not merely as a successor to Alexander, the Macedonian invader, but as a king in his own right over his own domain.

One important feature that Kuhrt and Sherwin-White appear to have overlooked is the potential connection between Apollo and Nabû.²⁰⁶ It seems probable that the syncretism of these two gods was more than simply a Greek attempt to understand the oriental divinities which they encountered. Rather in addition to connecting himself and his dynasty more broadly with a powerful regional divinity, Antiochos I deliberately sought to place himself within a Babylonian divine heritage in the same manner as he revealed his divine heritage to the Greeks. To further the strong possible bonds between Nabû, Apollo, and Antiochos there is a clear parallel between Nabû's and Antiochos' titles and a strong emphasis on genealogy which is rare in this type of document.²⁰⁷ Kosmin suggests that we can draw from this genealogy a further set of equivalences: Marduk-Zeus-Seleukos and Nabû-Apollo-Antiochos.²⁰⁸ The associations between Zeus and Seleukos and Apollo and Antiochos were well known in the later Seleukid period.²⁰⁹ Perhaps the most interesting verbal play that Kosmin identifies is in the third name given for the Ezida temple, *bīt Anūtika* which sounds like *Anti'uku* and may imply *bīt Anti'uku*, 'temple of Antiochos',²¹⁰ once again heightening the connection between Antiochos and Apollo/Nabû.

The importance of Nabû for Antiochos appears to be three-fold: his local and regional prominence, his connection with kingship rituals, and finally the development of his connection with Apollo which allowed him to develop his divine genealogy in similar ways in different idioms. The Apollo-Nabû connection explains a greater interest in local cults in royal propaganda than has been previously acknowledged. This interest was more than just a general acceptance of local cults, but rather was the result of active utilisation of these cults in order to legitimate Seleukid rule.

Antiochos I, Apollo, and Iranian kingship ²¹¹

It is clear that Antiochos made use of Apollo to help institutionalise his status as monarch in the three core regions of the empire explored above, Asia Minor, the Seleukis/Syria (through Antioch), and Babylonia. One final other region needs examination, the old Persian heartland of Persis and Iran. The Iranians

were the last and arguably most powerful group within the old Achaimenid empire whom the Seleukids needed to mollify in the new structures of the empire. It does not appear that Apollo was previously held in particular relevance in Iran prior to Seleukid conquest, but rather that the iconography of Apollo established by Antiochos I became to be interpreted there as an image of the king. This identification lasted well into the Parthian period. Here too it seems that the Apollo iconography created by Antiochos I to emphasise his familial connections to Apollo (and related gods) also played a role in presenting Antiochos as a legitimate sovereign. However, unlike elsewhere in the empire where Apollo or a god syncretised with Apollo played a significant role in Antiochos' propaganda, no similar syncretism appears to have taken place among the Iranians in the Seleukid period. After the Seleukid period, there may have been some attempt at forging a syncretism between Apollo and Mithras. However, this syncretism appears to postdate the Seleukids and may have first appeared in Kommagene in the reign of Antiochos I of Kommagene.²¹² Nevertheless, the Apollo image did appear to have had a powerful iconographic impact on the east of the empire. One reason for this may be its possible interpretation as a representation of the Graeco-Persian king or as Graeco-Persian royal power drawing on representations of the Persian king as archer.

Archers had a broad range of associations in Greek iconography, within the divine realm they were often associated with Apollo or his sister while in the Near East and Iran a different set of associations had developed, particularly connecting the image to royalty. The iconography of a royal archer was common in Assyrian and Egyptian iconography as well as in Persian sculpture, coinage, and inscriptions in the eras prior to the Seleukids.²¹³ The relationship between archery and royal power was reinforced by the Persian coinage issued in Asia Minor. These coin types featured a bearded archer in one of four poses: 1) the head and torso of a figure holding a bow in his right hand and arrows in his left; 2) a full-length figure kneeling and shooting a bow with a quiver slung over the shoulder; 3) a full-length figure running with a bow in the outstretched left hand and a spear in the right hand; and 4) a full-length figure running with a bow in the outstretched left hand and a dagger in the right hand.²¹⁴ The figure on these coins has been identified by modern scholars as either the general representation of a Persian king or as a god.²¹⁵ As archery was often associated in the Greek mind with the Persian king and the effeminate eastern style of warfare,²¹⁶ it is probable that the Greeks also identified this figure as that of the Persian king. This Greek perspective of the East was not entirely divorced from the Persian king's own self-representation. Darius, in particular, is shown holding a bow resting on his foot on both the Behistun monument and at Naqš-e Rostam, as well as identifying himself as a

skilled bowman in inscriptions. On his tomb at Naqš-e Rostam, Darius describes himself:

I am skilled both in hands and in feet. As a horseman, I am a good horseman. As a bowman, I am a good bowman, both on foot and on horseback. As a spearman, I am a good spearman, both on foot and on horseback.²¹⁷

Darius' self-description highlights his martial skills which in turn emphasise his own personal role in the military success of the empire. The training of Persian youths as horsemen, archers, and spearmen was also stressed in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*.²¹⁸ These claims underline the importance of the bow for the Persian nobles and for the king in particular. The symbol of the bow was utilised in a similar way by the Assyrian kings and represents the expression of royal power through conquest. This meme was adopted by the Persian kings to express their own power and to express their virtues as fine warriors. This wide and well-established usage identifies the figures on the Persian archer coins not as one specific king but as a more general representation of royal power.

It was the image of the king as an archer that may have been particularly important for the Iranian interpretation of Antiochos' new Apollo-on-the-omphalos type. While this reverse image was not directly related to the Persian archers, the archers defined how one could represent a king on coinage. The image selected by Antiochos I for his new type clearly depicts Apollo as an archer, as he holds an arrow (sometimes more than one) and a bow rests at his side. It seems sensible to conclude that for a Persian audience, the representation of Apollo as an archer fell into the same category of interpretation as other archer coinage. The range of interpretation concerning the Persian archers suggests that the Seleukid Apollo could represent either kingly power or the king himself to an Iranian audience. If this is the case, then the Apollo-on-the-omphalos coinage offered a combination of potential interpretations to different audiences: Apollo, Nabû, and royal power. All of these interpretations reinforced the image of Seleukid power either through the suggestions of divine support or through the representation of the legitimate royal authority. However, the appearance of archers on the two sets of coinages is not enough, without other evidence, to make an ideological connection between the kingly/divine image of the Persian coins and the divine figure of the Seleukid coins.

While it is possible to make the iconographic link between the concept of king-ship embodied by the Persian archers and Antiochos I's Apollo-on-the-omphalos type, a clearer connection can be made between the coinage issued by Datames/Tarkamuwa in Kilikia during the Satraps' Revolt (369–361) (Figure 2.11). This coinage series features Ba'al of Tarsus on the obverse and a bearded

figure seated right on a backless chair and dressed in Median/Persian dress with a leather cap, trousers, a sleeved-cloak, and arm guards on the reverse. The figure is examining an arrow held on each end. In the lower field there is a bow, in the upper field there is a winged-disk. There are legends in Aramaic on both sides, on the obverse B'LTRZ (Ba'al of Tarsus) and on the reverse TRKMW.²¹⁹



Figure 2.11 Silver stater, Tarsos, TRKMW: Ba'al/Seated figure holding an arrow.

Image courtesy of Pegasi Numismatics

The similarities of the obverse of these coins to those issued by Pharnabazus in the 370s and to those issued by Mazaios sometime before 350 confirm a date within that time frame.²²⁰ This places the coins approximately 80 years before the introduction of the Apollo type. As Kilikia was a long distance from the Persian heartland and these coins were minted to demonstrate Persian power of some sort in Asia Minor, it is difficult to determine how the image would have been received in Persia. Since the image would have been taken to represent a Persian king (due to the common representations of the king as archer by the Parthian royal house who adopted a similar type as their reverse type), it is possible that the Seleukid court reacted in a similar fashion and adapted it for their own purposes.

Before using the Tarkamuwa coinage as the basis for how the Persian elite may have interpreted Antiochos' introduction of the Apollo type, it is necessary to assess how the Tarkamuwa type itself may have been interpreted. The prior analyses divide into two categories: the first that the image was local and not related to Persian propaganda;²²¹ second that the coinage was an attempt by a member of the local elite to usurp the royal prerogative and to express its own royal authority.²²² The first of these interpretations is persuasive only if the coinage was not minted by a Persian satrap in revolt or a

local satrap attempting to win royal favour against the revolting satraps. As this coinage clearly draws on the royal elements of the winged-disk and the royal archer, it reflects and interprets royal propaganda to further the issuer's message. Since the winged-disk may represent Ahura Mazda, this coinage emphasises the royal connotation of the image. Furthermore, the main figure on the coin is most likely not a god because of the appearance of Ahura Mazda who normally appears with the Achaemenid king in the same or similar position.²²³ Since the figure is not divine, it must have represented either the king or the revolting satrap presenting himself as king. The reverse image of this coinage reflects the important martial imagery of the Persian archer. The identification of the archer as Persian is clear based on the clothing. The coin should therefore be interpreted as an assertion of Persian power, either in revolt from or in support of the king. Moysey argues that the figure attempts to legitimise Datames' revolt from the Persian king in terms of Persian iconography.²²⁴ By usurping the image of the archer for himself and associating himself with Ahura Mazda, Datames/Tarkamuwa could portray his part in the Satraps' Revolt as a legitimate act of rule, a practice that could equally well pertain to the Seleukids as they established power east of Babylon. If the alternate case is true, and the coinage was issued by a loyal local dynast vying for power at the expense of the revolting satraps, the coinage presents the same image of a divinely guided Persian ruler. In either case, the image of the seated archer refers to the royal power of the expressly Persian king.

As we have established that the Tarkamuwa coinage served as a representation of authority, mostly likely royal power, let us now examine the iconographic similarities and differences between the Tarkamuwa archer and the Seleukid Apollo-on-the-omphalos which arose some four decades later. While the basic image is the same on both types, there are significant differences between them, but these are not so great as to prevent a similar interpretation for either issue. The most significant difference is that the Seleukid Apollo is either nude or lightly draped whereas the Tarkamuwa archer is dressed in Persian attire. The wearing of clothing on the two types is often seen by scholars as the most significant barrier to identifying the ideological message in the same way. Some scholars believe that the nudity of Apollo would have prevented any Iranian from identifying the image as the royal archer.²²⁵ It is believed that Iranians would not have accepted the image of a nude figure as a representation of a king, because of their negative views on nudity and its associations with Greece. However, if the image of the royal archer represented the abstract concept of kingship rather than a specifically Achaemenid king, then I believe the objection to the clothing should be immaterial. If the Iranian audience for this coinage believed that the archer

image was a reflection of royal power and they were ruled by a Greek king, it should have been possible to make the connection between the two image types. Even if the connection was not explicit, certainly a Greek court, obviously inured to nudity, would have believed that an association would have been evoked in the minds of the Iranian subjects. Furthermore, the coins were issued by the Seleukid administration which consistently chose a Greek manner of representation. This, however, should not have prevented the interpretation of the image as that of a royal archer. Finally, the image of Apollo-on-the-omphalos that was minted in the eastern part of the Seleukid territory under Antiochos I and Antiochos II was usually shown with a draped figure. The gold and silver coins minted at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, Ekbatana, and Ai Khanoum all show Apollo with a draped cloth over at least one leg.²²⁶ This does not appear to be the case in the bronze coinage minted at Ekbatana, although it is not clear whether the figure is draped.²²⁷ Although the Apollo is not in Persian dress, I do not believe that this would have precluded some Iranians from interpreting the message of this coinage as a Greek king ruling over Iranian lands.



Figure 2.12 Silver tetradrachm, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, Mithradates III: Mithradates III/Apollo/King seated on a throne. Triton XIII, Lot: 591. www.cngcoins.com

The second most striking difference is the object upon which the archer sits. The Seleukid Apollo normally sits on the omphalos and the Tarkamuwa archer sits on a backless chair. The omphalos was important in reflecting Apollo's mantic qualities for the Greek audience. However, Apollo's seat had little importance in the eastern interpretation of the image. In fact, the Parthian coinage, which is also closely related to the Tarkamuwa image, normally featured the image of king seated on a backless chair (*Figure 2.12*).²²⁸ During the reign of Mithradates I, this chair was replaced by the omphalos (*Figure 2.13*), although the backless chair also continued to be used. This suggests that

the two images became interchangeable by the Parthian period. One antecedent for the Arsacid coinage type of the seated archer is the Seleukid image of Apollo-on-the-omphalos. This also suggests that during the Parthian period, the chair was an insignificant factor in the iconography which could be replaced without changing the central meaning of the type in the East.



Figure 2.13 Silver drachm, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, Mithradates I: Mithradates I/Apollo/King seated on the omphalos. Yale University Art Gallery. 2001.87.13905

Three further differences between the coin types can be singled out: the lack of the winged-disk in the upper field, the position of the bow, and the direction in which the figure is seated. The latter seems to have no iconographic significance, as there does not appear to be a difference between the orientation of gods and mortals on coins. There was a preference in Seleukid coinage for reverse figures to face left, but this tendency does not hold true for the Persian coinage.²²⁹ The orientation of the figure may be due to customary practices of the different empires rather than a specific ideological function. The position of the bow is much more natural in the Seleukid version. Whereas the Tarkamuwa bow was placed in the open space at the foot of the figure, the Seleukid Apollo rests his hand on the bow which stands upright behind him. The manner in which Apollo holds the bow is also reminiscent of the Persian images in which the king holds the bow by the end with the string turned towards him rather than away from him as is common in the Assyrian fashion.²³⁰ That Apollo's bow appears Archaic (straight rather than recurve) is in accordance with common Greek representations of gods and heroes.²³¹ The bow of Darius is also Archaic and straight in style.²³² This may also have to do with traditional attributes of Persian royal thought rather than a direct Assyrian precedent. It is interesting that the figure on Tarkamuwa's coinage is represented with the more realistic compound bow rather than the heroic or

royal recurve bow. The winged-disk has clear significance as it identifies the figure as the Persian king, satrap, or high official supported by Ahura Mazda.²³³ The Seleukids did not claim their right to rule from Ahura Mazda; therefore it is not surprising that the winged-disk does not appear on any of their coinage.²³⁴ As the winged-disk is normally associated with Zoroastrian symbolism that was adopted by the Achaimenid royal house, it was not exclusively a symbol of kingship. Thus, as with the coinage of the Persian kings themselves, the lack of the winged-disk would not have prevented anyone from potentially identifying the archer figure as a king. Furthermore, there is ample Parthian evidence that suggests that the seated archer can be identified with the image of the king even without the presence of the winged-disk.

One very interesting possible similarity for an Iranian audience is the use of legends on the Tarkamuwa coinage. The figure on the obverse is clearly identified through the legend as a god, it seems plausible that the legend on the reverse would serve a similar function and identify the figure on the reverse. This may have been an important connection that would not have been readily apparent to the Seleukid mint authorities. If this was the normal interpretation of legends by the Persian elite, then the name of the king on the reverse would identify the Apollo figure as the king.

The continuity of this type of legend in Iran was so strong that it appears to have continued through the era of Seleukid rule and into the Parthian period, where the royal name appears on the reverse of the coinage (with the archer figure often identified as the king). The link between the Apollo-on-the-omphalos and the archer of Tarkamuwa is reinforced by the appearance of a similar image on Parthian archer-type beginning with the reign of Arsakes I, ruled 247–211. One method for advertising the new Parthian claim to power was the creation of the Parthian seated archer, often thought of as a re-creation of the Tarkamuwa type.²³⁵ This was an interesting choice if the Tarkamuwa coinage was minted as an act of rebellion from the Achaimenid king. However, this was insignificant for the Seleukid kings who had replaced the Achaimenid rulers, as the type suggests a legitimate monarch. So although Tarkamuwa rebelled against a specific Achaimenid king, in doing so he claimed Achaimenid legitimacy for himself. As neither the Seleukids nor the Parthians considered themselves Achaimenids, they could and did freely choose from among the elements of Achaimenid representation. This interpretation of the development of the significance of the imagery from Tarkamuwa to the Parthians²³⁶ is more plausible if the image passed through the Seleukid interpretation. If this is the case, then it seems reasonable to conclude that the Parthians were able to interpret the Seleukid Apollo image as a representation of the king.

As the Parthian kings began their empire by capturing a Seleukid satrapy, they would have been acquainted with Seleukid coin types which were prominent at the beginning of their empire.²³⁷ The most prominent Seleukid coin types during this period were the Apollo-on-the-omphalos images produced under Antiochos I and II. Arsakes I, the first king of the Parthian empire, began to issue coinage after he defeated the rebellious Seleukid satrap Andragoras around the beginning of Seleukos II's reign.²³⁸ The coins that Arsakes I mints are strikingly similar to the Tarkamuwa coinage bearing some elements of the Frataraka coinage,²³⁹ and also to the Seleukid Apollo-on-the-omphalos coinage. The similarities between the Parthian and Seleukid types of coinage are more striking given that the coinage of the independent Baktrian kings departed radically from the Seleukid model. Perhaps because during the reign of Seleukos II Apollo-on-the-omphalos was replaced by a standing Apollo, the Parthians were allowed to create a distinctive coinage that drew on Seleukid models without appearing too close to the coinage of the reigning Seleukid king. Additionally, as the Parthian kings were not rebelling directly from Seleukid authority but rather conquering territory from a rebellious satrap, they were more comfortable adopting a similar image.²⁴⁰ This would have increased the acceptance of the new Parthian coinage due to the familiarity of the type. Furthermore, if the coinage was seen as representing a seated king then a more Persian version of this king fitted more neatly with Parthian royal ideology.

The reverse of the Arsakes coinage features a figure seated on a backless throne wearing a hat with cheek flaps, a long-sleeved cloak and trouser suit. Curtis suggests that the closest parallel for the long-sleeved coat is the Tarkamuwa seated archer coinage, as the cloak is not a typical feature of Parthian dress.²⁴¹ She sees the adoption of the trouser suit as a significant departure from Hellenistic practice specifically citing Alexander's refusal to adopt Persian trousers in Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* 45.1–3.²⁴² However, this ignores the image of the horned-rider coinage issued under Seleukos I. If this coinage represents Seleukos, then the Seleukid kings may have occasionally appeared in Persian dress (perhaps unsurprising given Antiochos' Baktrian heritage). Outside of this singular coin type, the Seleukid kings were never represented in a non-Greek fashion.²⁴³ Early Parthian coinage closely recalls the clothing of the Tarkamuwa coinage in contrast to the naked Apollo. The hat which both the king on the obverse and the figure on the reverse are wearing suggests that the two figures represent the same individual. The clothing on the figure emphasises the Iranian attributes of the figure, this clearly marks a difference between the two coinage types. The Seleukid figure would always appear Greek owing to his near nudity. The clothing on the Parthian figure marked a return to Iranian rule. A second major difference

between this coinage and the Datames coinage is that the figure on the Arsakes coinage held a bow rather than an arrow. This difference may be best explained by the pose of Apollo on some of the coinage of Antiochos I and II. On these coins Apollo held a bow in his outstretched hand rather than the arrow.²⁴⁴ Interestingly, the bow was held by the figure with the string facing away from him. This pose appears slightly unnatural as the figure's wrist is twisted outward. This appears to be a stylistic feature that is common to both the Seleukid and Parthian types, although its meaning is unclear. This suggests a direct inspiration for the Arsakes coinage from the Seleukid coinage that was circulating directly before his invasion, rather than just reproducing a Parthian version of the Tarkamuwa coinage.²⁴⁵ Another development of the Parthian version of this type was the replacement of the backless throne with the omphalos of Apollo by the reign of Mithradates I (c. 171–138) [FIGURE 2.13].²⁴⁶ This development suggests an awareness of the similarities between the two types of coinage. Another feature of the Parthian coinage is that the archer was not bearded; this may be related to the preference for non-royal bearded figures after Alexander, as Arsakes does not appear bearded on the obverse. This represents a significant inheritance from the Seleukids rather than from the Achaimenid prototype. A further similarity between the Parthian and Seleukid types is the positioning of the feet of the seated figure. In the Datames coinage the figure's feet were parallel as if the figure was seated comfortably on a throne. The figure in the Seleukid image pulled his right (rear) leg back so that his foot rested against the omphalos. This posture was adopted by the Parthian figure even while seated on a throne.

The figure of the archer on the Parthian coinage is often interpreted as the image of the king or of royal power in the same manner as the Tarkamuwa image. Therefore, the Seleukid image of Apollo could be interpreted in the same manner, demonstrating another potential interpretation of the Seleukid Apollo outside of a narrow Greek context. This suggests that under Antiochos I, the Seleukids skilfully crafted an image of royal authority that could be recognised across the entire empire. Furthermore, the Seleukid royal court was aware of the various icono-graphic traditions of the empire's subjects. Perhaps most significantly, the variety of different interpretations suggested to audiences within the empire demonstrates that the Apollo-on-the-omphalos image was not part of a simple attempt to impose an entirely Greek image on the empire, but rather it presented the more subtle message that the subjects of the kingdom were under the rule of a Greek king who was operating within the boundaries of local traditional practices.

Notes

- 1 Austin 1986, 455–7; Billows 1990, 244–5; Stewart 1993, 161–2; Davies 2002, 6; Mileta 2002, 6. Cf. also the critical view of Mehl 1980.
- 2 Diod. 19.90.2–4; See Hadley 1974, 53.
- 3 For a distancing of Seleukos from Alexander as his rule becomes more established see above, and Iossif 2004; Erickson 2012, contrast Plischke 2014, 153 no. 1106.
- 4 BM 36710 /34' – 35', year 38 SE, reference to years 37 and 36 SE Sachs and Hunger 344 f. = del Monte 27f. = Austin² no. 163 has Antiochos resident at Sardis in 276/5–4 and *Illion* 32 suggests Antiochos' presence there in 275.
- 5 Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 27.
- 6 Iossif 2011, 268–72 suggests that the original mint for the Apollo *Toxotes* coinage was not Sardis, owing partially to the late introduction there, but rather Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris. This view seems entirely reasonable and no longer necessitates the focus on Asia Minor as the most significant territory for Apolline imagery.
- 7 Zahle 1990, 133.
- 8 Cf. Just. 15.4; *OGIS* 219.26–7 = *Illion* 32; *OGIS* 227 = Welles 1934, no. 22 = *IDidyma* II 493; Powell 1925, 140 = *IERYthrai* 205 ll. 74–5; cf. Klinghardt 1999, 9; Ogden 1999, 118–19; Habicht 1970, 85; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 27.
- 9 Ogden 2011b; Engels 2010 for comparison with Augustus. See Fraser 1996, 36–9; Ogden 2017 for the possibility that this story was derived from a now lost *Seleukos Romance*. This narrative would have consisted of the response of Didymean Apollo, the self-kindling fire, the dream of Seleukos' mother, the anchor stone in Babylonia, Seleukos' recovery of Alexander's diadem in the Euphrates, the love story of Antiochos and Stratonike and the Magi's trick to delay the construction of Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris. Additionally, the stories of the horned statues of Seleukos at Alexandria which appear in the gamma recension of the *Alexander Romance* (*Hist. Alex.* 2.28) also may have been derived from this work.
- 10 Just. 15.4.2–7: *Huius quoque virtus clara et origo admirabilis fuit; 3 siquidem mater eius Laodice, cum nupta esset Antiocho, claro inter Philippi duces viro, visa sibi est per quietem ex concubitu Apollinis concepisse, 4 gravidamque factam munus concubitus a deo anulum accepisse, in cuius gemma anchora sculpta esset; iussaque donum filio, quem peperisset, dare. 5 Admirabilem fecit hunc visum et anulus, qui postera die eiusdem sculpturae in lecto inventus est, et figura anchorae, quae in femore Seleuci nata cum ipso parvulo fuit. 6 Quamobrem Laodice anulum Seleuco eunti cum Alexandro Magno ad Persicam militiam, edocto de origine sua, dedit.*
- 11 *OGIS* 219.26–7 = *Illion* 32; *OGIS* 227 = Welles 1934, no. 22 = *IDidyma* II 493; Powell 1925, 140 = *IERYthrai* 205 ll. 74–5.
- 12 Anchor ring: App. Syr. 56.
- 13 Cf. Kritt 1997; Newell 1938, 85–95, 102–6; Houghton and Lorber 2002, 34–5, 43–4; Houghton 1991.
- 14 Hadley 1969. Most of these prophetic *logoi* do not in fact discuss Seleukos' genealogical connection with Apollo but rather give a foreshadowing of his future kingship. These *logoi* therefore form a distinct category of Seleukos' pursuit of legitimacy but should be carefully

- separated from the Apollo birth legend.
- 15 Welles 1934, no. 5; See below for a full discussion of Seleukos', Apama's, and Antiochos' relations with Miletos; cf. Ramsey 2016.
- 16 Hadley 1969, 152.
- 17 Coşkun 2012.
- 18 The decree available to Hadley *OGIS* 219 has been the subject of some controversy over the dating, our new dating of the decree will form part of the analysis of the second volume. The discovery of the Aigai decree, Malay and Riel 2009, suggests a close link between Seleukos, Antiochos, and Apollo which had not hitherto been confirmed at this early a date.
- 19 *IERYTHRAI* 205 ll. 74–5: ὑμνεῖτε ἐπὶ σπονδαῖς Ἀπόλλωνος κυανοπλοκάμου | παῖδα Σέλευκον ...
- 20 Klinghardt 1999, 9; Habicht 1970, 85.
- 21 App. Syr 62; cf. Will 1979, 267–70. Concerning the precise geographic repartition of power, see Engels 2017a, 114–26.
- 22 Plin. *NH* 6.48, 6.49, 6.58, 6.93; Holt 1999, 27 no. 3; Cohen 2013; Engels 2017a, 157–210.
- 23 The composition of these courts as separate entities is impossible to determine, for the role of wives and crown-princes at the Seleukid court see Strootman 2007, 93, 111–18. See Holton 2018 for a study of the problems of diarchy for the early Seleukid court. For a general overview of the current state of court studies see Duindam 2011, 5–11. It may be possible to suggest that the division of the Seleukid court was not as firm as the appointment of Ptolemaic regents over Kypros but that the appointment of a second king also entailed significant powers alongside the title.
- 24 Houghton and Lorber 2002, 21–2, 51–2, 65–6.
- 25 Houghton and Lorber 2002, 99.
- 26 See Kritt 1997, 106–8 for the die study of Susa which dates the type to c. 287. For the chronology of the Baktrian mint associated with the Apollo gold stater see: Kritt 1996, 17–21. For the assignment of the coin to Baktria rather than Susa see Kritt 1996, 1–16. From Kritt's die study it appears that the gold stater was part of the first issue of the mint and the series should be placed at the same time as the similar stater was produced in Susa.
- 27 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 163, 257.
- 28 Kritt 1997, 106–8; cf. Will 1979, 271.
- 29 See Houghton and Lorber 2002, 4.
- 30 Welles 1934, no. 5, pp. 36–7.
- 31 Kosmin 2013a.
- 32 It is possible that this pairing lies behind the reference to the wife of Antiochos as 'sister' in *ILLION* 32. On this particular terminology, cf. Jones 1993. I now believe on other grounds that this decree dates to the reign of Antiochos I rather than Antiochos III. Against the identification with Antiochos III (who is again favoured by Piejko 1991), cf. Robert 2007, 570 no. 4, 575; Orth 1977, 61–70; Jones 1993; Ehling 2003, 300–4; Ma 2000, 254–9; Dreyer 2007, 252 no. 62, 277 no. 190.; Otto 1928, 17–21, 26. f; Habicht 1970, 83 no. 3; Brodersen 1989, 193 no. 5. If this decree dates to the reign of Antiochos I, then the presentation pairing of

Antiochos and Stratonike as Artemis and Apollo would have not only been restricted to the east of the empire. The identification of the king and queen as gods can be paralleled by the Theocritus' *Idyll* 17.126–34 comparison of the wedding of Ptolemy Philadelphos to his sister Arsinoe with that of Zeus and Hera.

33 Hadley 1974, 54.

34 See discussion below for the equivalency of Nabû and Apollo and the significance for Antiochos I and for the importance of Daphne.

35 Aperghis 2004, 220–44; see Howgego 1995, 35–7 for state expenditure as the primary concern for new coinage. In the Seleukid empire this took the form of tetradrachms for the most part. Aperghis 2004, 220; Houghton 2004, 51.

36 Houghton and Lorber 2002, 51 date the coinage on two criteria: first to post 305 based on the naming of Seleukos as Basileus, and second the first datable appearance of the horned-horse head occurred in c. 295 at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris. The Mesopotamian province for these coins and the use of the horse head by Antiochos in the East led Houghton and Lorber to suggest an origin in Babylonia/Mesopotamia. The Apollo/bull coins from Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris were produced in the 280s: Houghton and Lorber 2002, 65.

37 App. Syr. 59, 62; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 23–4; Grainger 1990a, 53; Ogden 1999, 121.

38 Engels 2017b, 103–4 argues that the Upper Satrapies did not include Mesopotamia. However, this did not prevent Antiochos in his role as joint king from influencing activity in the city, even though it remained outside of the satrapy that he directly controlled. The problem of Antiochos' unique position is reflected in his title, 'crown prince' see ABC 11; Sherwin-White 1983b, 265–6. For the activities of Antiochos in Babylon in this period see: ABC 11; BCHP 5; BCHP 6; BCHP 7; BCHP 8.

39 Lib. Or. 11.85 ff; See Downey 1961, 56–7 for the arguments concerning the precise date of the founding of the city.

40 Lib. Or. 11.94–5; Downey 1961, 82–3.

41 The city does also have a Zeus foundation myth in addition to the hidden plan of Zeus in Libanius. See Capdetrey 2007. However, here the foundation of the grove with its connection to the royal family is the impetus behind the coinage.

42 Houghton and Lorber 2002, 32–4.

43 App. Syr. 58; See Ogden 2011b for the use of lightning and the destruction of Typhon/Orontes and its importance for these two Syrian cities. See also chapter one.

44 See Downey 1961, 581–2 for the naming of the city. See also Ogden 2011a, chapter four.

45 OGIS 245 = IGLS 1184.

46 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 323. See Coşkun 2012 for the dating of Antiochos' arrival in Asia Minor following the period of upheaval.

47 Iossif 2011, 268–72.

48 Babelon 1890, xliv – xlviii.

49 See Iossif 2011, 259–62 for a rejection of the coinage of King Nikokles of Paphos as forgeries. See Lacroix 1949, 169–75 for the compelling reasons why the coinage was not modelled on a statue. Nevertheless, there is significant overlap with some of the Delphic coinage as identified by Lacroix. It may be possible that there may have been a cult statue

- similar to this image in Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris which served as the model for this coinage.
- 50 See Houghton and Lorber 2002: nude: nos. 327, 328 (Magnesia on the Meander); clothed: nos. 311 (Smyrna), 312 (Smyrna), 324 (Sardis), 325 (Sardis), 331 (Tarsos), 335 (Antioch), 360 (Kilikia/Northern Syria/Mesopotamia), 378 (Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris), 379 (Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris), 380 (Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris), 409–10 (Ekbatana), 435–9 (Ai Khanoum).
 - 51 Apollo is commonly referred to as far-shooting and depicted with bows. E.g. Hom. *Il.* 1.20; LIMC, Apollo: p. 184, nos. 43, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 73, 78, 79, 270, 274, 270, 287, 324, 317, 324, 325, 332, 351, 384, 425, 434, 1000, 1001c, 1051, 1052, 1079, 1075. Cf. Iossif 2011, 262–8.
 - 52 See below for a discussion of different types of bows. The representation of bows varies significantly depending on the medium, time period, and style. But they can be divided into two broad categories, simple bows and recurve bows. Simple bows consist of a straight piece of wood with a string attached to each end, when strung the bow appears to have a single curve. Recurve bows come in a larger variety of representations, but generally show a bow with more than a single curve.
 - 53 OGIS 245 = IGLS 1184.
 - 54 OGIS 227 = Welles 1934, no. 22 = *I.Didyma* II 493.
 - 55 See above. For the priest of Seleukos Nikator in Roman Dura see: Welles, Fink, and Gilliam 1959, no. 25. Downey 1988, 50 gives the god crowned as the Gad of Dura, who Drijvers 1980, 67 names as Zeus *Olympios* /*Megistos*.
 - 56 See for example Fontenrose 1988, 16–17; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 24–5; Iossif 2011, 232–4.
 - 57 Dowden 2007, 49; Burkert 1985, 143.
 - 58 See Graf 2009 for a brief overview of Apollo, particularly useful on his role as an oracular god in Asia Minor are pages 60–4, 71–5, for origins see 130–42.
 - 59 Burkert 1985, 144.
 - 60 Burkert 1985, 144–5.
 - 61 See Brown 2004 for a reassessment of the possible Hittite/Lyikian names for Apollo.
 - 62 For the Homeric connection between Apollo and Lykia see Burkert 2010, 224.
 - 63 Sarpedon and Glaukos: Hom. *Il.* 16.527–32; 16.667–83; possibly of Lykian born: Hom. *Il.* 4.101 see Bryce 1977, no. 11.
 - 64 *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 179.
 - 65 Bacchylides 12.147–8.
 - 66 Soph. *Oid.* 203.
 - 67 Eur. *Rhes.* 224–5. See Bryce 1990 for the dating of this play on the basis of the Lykian reference.
 - 68 The tradition of dedications by Lydian dynasts is traced by Herodotus back to Midas. Hdt. 1.13–14 and culminates in the Croesus story. For an analysis of the purposes of these early foreign dedications see Kaplan 2006.
 - 69 Burkert 2010, 224, 1985, 144.
 - 70 Lib. *Or.* 11.85–8.
 - 71 Besides his literary connections to Anatolia (even if his origins are not Hittite or Anatolian:

- Graf 2009, 134–7), more evidence of his historical links to the region were considered at the conference in Denizli (21–22 August 2010) on ‘The Archaeology of Religion: Sanctuaries of Apollo in Anatolia’.
- 72 Welles 1934, no. 9: [- - - -]ημεν τὰ κα[τὰ μ]έ[ρ]ος καὶ σοὶ γεγρά[φαμεν ἵνα διὰ] / [πλειόνων αὐτοῖς] χρηματίσης. [προαιρούμ]ε[θα γὰρ τῶν Ἑλληνίδων] / [πόλεων ἀεὶ τοῖς πολ]ίταις μὲν εὐερ[γετοῦντες χαρίζεσθαι, οὐχ ἥκισ-] / [τα δὲ καὶ σὺν εὐ]σεβήαι συναύξειν τὰς τῶν θε[ῶν τιμὰς, ὥστ’ εὐμέ-] / [νειαν τοῖς μεθ’ ἡμ]ᾶς παραδόσιμον ε[ἰ]ς τὸν αἰῶνα πο[- ἡμῖν]
- 73 See Ma 2000, 179–242 for the exchange of benefactions for political purposes by Antiochos III in Asia Minor, a practice that stretches back before the Hellenistic period.
- 74 Malay and Riel 2009.
- 75 Fontenrose 1988, 1–20.
- 76 For the dedication of the clothing of the Saite king Necho II to the Branchidae see: Hdt. 2.159.3; Kaplan 2006, 134.
- 77 Hdt. 1.46.2.
- 78 Hdt. 6.19.3. Although a later tradition assigns the sacking of the temple to Xerxes rather than Darius, Hammond 1998, 339–42. Cf. the doubts of the later tradition expressed by Fontenrose 1988, 12–13.
- 79 Dignas 2002, 235.
- 80 Fontenrose 1988, 15.
- 81 Kallisthenes, *FGrH* 124 F 4 = Strab. 17.1.43.
- 82 Strab. 11.11.4; 14.1.5; Curt. 1.5.28–35; Plut, *Mor.* 557b; Paus. 1.16. 3; 8.46. 3.1; See Parke 1985, 1986; Hammond 1998; Fredricksmeyer 2003, 266.
- 83 Dignas 2002, 236 for the oddity of the split over the control of sacred revenues before Alexander.
- 84 Dignas 2002, 236–7.
- 85 For a survey of the epigraphic traces of this early interaction see Blais 2012.
- 86 *IDidyma* 479 = *SEG* 4.470 = *OGIS* 213.
- 87 *IDidyma* 480 = *SEG* 26.1234 = *SEG* 34.1075 = *SEG* 4.442.
- 88 *IDidyma* 479.2–3, 25–6; *IDidyma* 480.10.
- 89 *IDidyma* 480.3.
- 90 *IDidyma* 479.1.
- 91 *IDidyma* 480.2.
- 92 Plin. *HN* 6.49; Cf. Müller 1976, 20–3, 58 for his role in Miletos; Plischke 2014, 46 for his role at the Seleukid court.
- 93 Robert 1984, 467–8.
- 94 Plut. *Dem.* 29.3.
- 95 *IDidyma* 480.4–8.
- 96 Plin. *HN* 6.49.

- 97 There is an interesting parallel for the tetrarch Brogitaros, *IDidyma* 475 = Bringmann-Steuben I 276, ll. 38 f.
- 98 Paus. 1.16.3 and 8.46.3; Strab. 14.1.5, 11.2.4, and 17.1.43 l; Kallisthenes *FGrH* 124 F14; see Tuchelt 1988, 427–38 for the argument concerning Darius and the sacking of the city, compare Greaves 2002, 115 for the sacking of the city by Xerxes. Moggi's (1973, 1–42) assertion that the statue is never mentioned as taken until the Hellenistic period is relevant even in light of the archaeological evidence, although the archaeological evidence should take precedence. Regardless of which Persian king sacked the sanctuary, or if the statue was ever taken, the oracle had ceased to function and Seleukos was able to use the return of sacred objects for his own propaganda.
- 99 Moggi 1973, 1–42 followed by Habicht 1994, 164–82.
- 100 Parke 1985, 22, 32.
- 101 See above for chronology.
- 102 App. Syr. 56. Whether or not these oracles are genuine is irrelevant to our argument, but rather it is significant that the oracles were seen as both possible and important. See Fontenrose 1988, 215–17 who rejects the historicity of all of the Seleukos oracles. Fontenrose rejects the historicity of the oracles primarily on the basis that Seleukos did not visit Didyma after 334 with Alexander, while this may be true it is not certain. Stronger are his arguments that all of the oracles look like they were designed to explain certain events, such as Seleukos' death and his kingship.
- 103 Fontenrose 1988, 15, 181. Kallisthenes, *FGrH* 124 F 14a = Strab. 17.1.43.
- 104 Lib. Or. 11.99.
- 105 Lib. Or. 11.94–5.
- 106 A full discussion of the names of the cities can be found below.
- 107 For Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris as the royal city see Sherwin-White 1987, 270. For the foundation story see Strab. 16.1.5; App. Syr. 58; Paus. 1.16.3. For dating the foundation see Hadley 1978; Sherwin-White 1983b, no. 36. While the date of the foundation remains uncertain: Kritt 1997, 99–103 adjusts Newell 1938, 10ff.'s date for the opening of the mint from 305/4 to c. 300. It does seem that Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris was founded prior to the cities of the Syrian tetrapolis.
- 108 Carney 1988, 134 for the importance of royally named cities.
- 109 App. Syr. 63; See Hannestad and Potts 1990, 116; Wright 2018 for the suggestion that the Doric temple at Seleukeia-in-Pieria was the temple to Seleukos I.
- 110 *OGIS* 214 = *IDidyma* 424/6 = Welles 1934, no. 5, ll. 1–7: Βασιλεὺς Σέλευκος Μιλησίων τῇ βουλῇ/καὶ τῷ δήμῳ χάριν· ἀφεστάλκαμεν εἰς/τὸ ἱερὸν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τοῦ ἐν Διδύμοις/τὴν τε λυχνίαν τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ποτήρια/χρυσᾶ καὶ ἀργυρᾶ εἰς ἀνάθεσιν τοῖς θεοῖς/τοῖς Σωτήρσι κομίζοντα Πολιάνθην, ἐπι/γραφὰς ἔχοντα.
- 111 Dignas 2002 for the nature of these inventory lists.
- 112 Welles 1934, no. 5, pp. 36–7.
- 113 Welles 1934, no. 5, p. 36.
- 114 See Wallace 2011; Dmitriev 2011, 112–42 for the importance of freedom as an ideology for the Greek cities in the competition to succeed Alexander.

- 115 Welles 1934, no. 5, pp. 36–7.
- 116 See Habicht 1970 for the cults of Seleukos in Asia Minor (82–90) and for founder cults to him (105–8).
- 117 Malay and Riel 2009.
- 118 OGIS 227= *IDidyma* II 493 = Welles 1934, no. 22, ll 2–6. τῶν προγόνων ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς πολλὰς καὶ μεγάλας/εὐεργεσίας κατατεθειμένων εἰς τὴν ὑμετέραν πόλιν διὰ τε/ τοὺς ἐγδεδομένους χρησμοὺς ἐκ τοῦ παρ’ ὑμῖν ἱεροῦ/τοῦ Διδυμέως Ἀπολλωνος καὶ διὰ τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸν θεὸν/συγγένειαν.
- 119 Malay and Riel 2009, 39–47.
- 120 *IErythrai* 205 ll. 74–5: ὑμεῖτε ἐπὶ σπονδαῖς Ἀπόλλωνος κυανοπλοκάμου | παῖδα Σέλευκον. ὃν αὐτὸς γείνατο χρυ[σ]ολύρας ...; see Klinghardt 1999, 9.
- 121 Habicht 1970, 85 dates the decree to 274, although a date closer to Seleukos’ death is possible. Iossif 2011, 246–7 follows Goukowsky 2002, 218–19 in translating παῖδα as ‘servant’ rather than ‘son’ and suggests Seleukos II rather than Seleukos I. Both seemingly ignore the statement that the god bore Seleukos in the following line. Iossif 2011, 246 also suggests that a date under Seleukos II is possible on the grounds of palaeography.
- 122 Habicht 1970, 149–50.
- 123 *ILlioni* 31 = OGIS 212: ... στεφανίτην μουσικὸν καὶ γυμνικὸν καὶ ἵππικόν, /ὥς καὶ τοῦ Ἀπολλωνος τελεῖται τοῦ ἀρχηγοῦ τοῦ /γένους αὐτοῦ.
- 124 The use of γένους may be paralleled by the use of πρόγονοι (referring only to Seleukos I) in the Koinon decree for Antiochos I.
- 125 Orth 1977, 47; Habicht 1970, 82–3.
- 126 Walbank 1992, 211; Bevan 1901, 627.
- 127 It is possible that the citizens at Aigai were aware of the growing Seleukid interest in Apollo and chose to represent this through the close association of the two in terms of locations of their temple but were not yet willing to accept that Seleukos was the son of Apollo. Furthermore, the Erythraian hymn appears to imply that Seleukos was still alive, although it is not necessarily the case.
- 128 The connections between benefactions and ancestry is clearly expressed in Seleukos II’s letter to the city: OGIS 227= *IDidyma* II 493 = Welles 1934, no. 22, ll 2–6. τῶν προγόνων ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς πολλὰς καὶ μεγάλας/εὐεργεσίας κατατεθειμένων εἰς τὴν ὑμετέραν πόλιν διὰ τε/τοὺς ἐγδεδομένους χρησμοὺς ἐκ τοῦ παρ’ ὑμῖν ἱεροῦ/τοῦ Διδυμέως Ἀπολλωνος καὶ διὰ τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸν θεὸν/συγγένειαν.
- 129 See for example the titles of both Gardner and Poole 1878; Babelon 1890 which highlight the Syrian connection of the Seleukid house.
- 130 See Mehl 1986.
- 131 Carney 1988, 134 for the importance of royally named cities.
- 132 See note 107.
- 133 App. Syr. 63; See Hannestad and Potts 1990, 116; Wright 2018 for the suggestion that the Doric temple at Seleukeia-in-Pieria was the temple to Seleukos I.
- 134 See Downey 1938, 1961, 21–45; Grainger 1990b; Cohen 1978, 17; Seleukeia: Malalas 8.199; Polyb. 5.59–60; Strab. 16.2.7; Laodikeia: Malalas 8.203, Strab. 16.2.9; Apameia: Malalas 8.205;

- 135 Malalas 8.200 for Antioch and 8.202–3 for Laodikeia.
- 136 Grainger 1997, 50 is probably correct in suggesting that Malalas is mistaken in creating this daughter for Seleukos, although she is included in Ogden 1999, 119's list of children of Seleukos I.
- 137 Carney 1988.
- 138 Babelon 1890, xlv–xlviii. For a rejection of this view and the view that the omphalos coinage represented a statue, see Lacroix 1949, 169.
- 139 Malkin 1987, 243, 2000; Herda 2008.
- 140 App. Syr. 58 for the foundation of Seleukeia-in-Pieria; Lib. Or. 11.85 ff. and Malalas 198–200 for the foundation of Antioch-on-the-Orontes. See Downey 1961, 56–7 for the dating of the foundation of Antioch and Downey 1961, 67–86 for a discussion of the foundation. See also (Ogden 2011a, 89–94, 2011b).
- 141 Downey 1938, 1961, 83; Malalas 204.9–16.
- 142 Lib. Or. 11.94–9.
- 143 Lib. Or. 11.94; Philostr. *Vita Apoll.* 1.16; Eust. *Dion. Per.* 916; Downey 1961, 83.
- 144 Lib. Or. 11. 95–6.
- 145 Lib. Or. 11.99.
- 146 Just. 15.4.
- 147 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 15, 16.
- 148 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 17.
- 149 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 18.
- 150 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 19.
- 151 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 20.
- 152 Downey 1961, 36.
- 153 Hoover 1996, 16.
- 154 Babelon 1890, xxxiv–xxxv; Newell 1941, 96.
- 155 For discussion of Bryaxis as the sculptor see Downey 1961, 85; *loc. class.* Cedrenus, *Compendium Historiarum*, 1.536.11 (Bonn ed.).
- 156 Lib. Or. 60. 9–11; Philostrogios, *Hist. Eccl.* 7.8, pp. 87.19–889 (ed. Bidez). See Downey 1961, 85 no. 143.
- 157 Lacroix 1949, 174.
- 158 Lacroix 1949, 174.
- 159 Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 15–16; Sherwin-White 1987, 1–32.
- 160 See Zahle 1990, 127–8 for the view that most propaganda was aimed explicitly at the Graeco-Macedonian elite.
- 161 See for example, Kuhrt 1987a, 1987b; Sherwin-White 1987, 1991; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993; Spek 1993, 1994; Erickson 2011; Iossif 2011, 250–1; Kosmin 2013a; Haubold 2013; Anagnostou-Laoutides 2016.

- 162 Verbrugge and Wickersham 2001, 13, see 13–5 for argument on the biography of Berossos and whether there were two men of the same name. See also Kosmin 2013b.
- 163 For repetition of the myth throughout the year see Çağırangan and Lambert 1991, 89–106.
- 164 See Kuhrt 1987a, 32–56; Sherwin-White 1983b, 265.
- 165 Lambert 1984.
- 166 Cf. Beaulieu 2014.
- 167 Lambert 1978, 79.
- 168 Lambert 1978, 79.
- 169 McEwan 1981, 35, 123, 125.
- 170 Bounni 1976, 46–8.
- 171 For translated text see: Pritchard 1955, 331–4. See Pallis 1926, 200–43 for problems with the idea of resurrection in the ceremony and 139–43 for the role of the king. For the role of a foreign king see Kuhrt 1987b, 33, 51; for Nabû's role in the festival see Pomponio 1978, 117–32. For the festival in general see Linssen 2004, 78–86.
- 172 See Engnell 1967, 36–7 for the relationship between Marduk-Nabû-King in the festival in the Sumero-Akkadian period and the identification of Nabû with the king.
- 173 Pritchard 1955, 331–4; Grayson 1975, no. 278; Sherwin-White 1983b, 156–9.
- 174 See Sommer 2000, 82–7 for analysis of problems of reconstructing the pre-Seleukid festival from the texts.
- 175 Pritchard 1955, 334.
- 176 Pritchard 1955, 331–2.
- 177 For examples, see: Frankfort 1948, 320; Pritchard 1955, 331–4; Sherwin-White 1983b, 156–9; Sommer 2000, 91.
- 178 Dirven 1999, 138; cf. Brinkman 1968, 138 for pushing the importance of the king receiving the cylinder into the post-Kassite period.
- 179 Sachs and Hunger 1989, II:204C rev. 14-L.E.; Mitsuma 2013; Plischke 2014, 285–7.
- 180 Sherwin-White 1983a, 1983b.
- 181 See now Anagnostou-Laoutides 2016, chapter four.
- 182 For Dura and Palmyra see: Dirven 1999, 128–56 and for Edessa see: Drijvers 1980, 41–75. For Hierapolis see Lucian *DDS* 35–7, Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.17.66–7, and Lightfoot 2003, 456–66.
- 183 Le Rider 1998, 21, 57.
- 184 Le Rider 1998, 21.
- 185 McDowell 1935, 137.
- 186 Strab. 16.1.7.
- 187 Dirven 1999, 132.
- 188 Cf. Newell 1941, 96.
- 189 Lucian *DDS* 35: μοῦνοι δὲ οὗτοι Ἀπόλλωνος γενειήτεω ξόανον δεικνύουσιν.

- 190 Macrobius. *Sat.* 1.17.66–67 *Hieropolitani praetera, qui sunt gentis Assyriorum, omnes solis effectus atque virtutes ad unius simulacra barbata speciem redigunt eumque Apollinem appellant. huius facies proluxa in acutum barba figurata est, eminente super caput calathos. simulacrum thorace munitum est, dextera erectam tenet hastam superstante Victoriae parvulo signo, sinistra floris porrigit speciem summisque ab umeris Gorgoneum velamentum redimitum anguibus tegit scapulas. aquilae propter expriment instar volatus, ante pedes imago feminea est, cuius dextera laevaue sunt signa feminarum, ea cingit flexuoso volumine draco.*
- 191 Seyrig 1972, 104–8, esp. fig 7; for a full discussion of the statue see Kropp 2013. It is worth noting Kropp's suggestions concerning the origins of the statue as Syrian rather than Mesopotamian and belonging to the Hierapolitan tradition rather than strictly Hattian tradition.
- 192 See Dirven 1999, 133–4 for connection on Artemis and Nanaia.
- 193 Strab. 11.1.7: τὰ δὲ Βόρσιππα ἱερὰ πόλις ἐστὶν Ἀρτέμιδος καὶ Ἀπολλωνος.
- 194 Bounni 1976, 48.
- 195 Pomponio 1978, 207ff.; Drijvers 1980, 63.
- 196 Drijvers 1980, 63.
- 197 Lib. *Or.* 11.81.
- 198 Torino 2006.
- 199 See below and Erickson and Wright 2011; Iossif 2011, 272–3.
- 200 Sherwin-White 1991, 76–8; Erickson 2011; Strootman 2013; Kosmin 2013a; Stevens 2014; Anagnostou-Laoutides 2016.
- 201 *BM 36277* (Translation Kuhrt). Sherwin-White 1991, 76–8.
- 202 This differs from traditional Greek titles which only use the king's name as formula. See Sherwin-White 1991, 119; Beaulieu 2014.
- 203 Sherwin-White 1991, 78–85.
- 204 Sherwin-White 1991, 83.
- 205 Kosmin 2013a.
- 206 See Anagnostou-Laoutides 2016 for the placement of the Zeus/Marduk and Nabû/Apollo formulation in a Babylonian context.
- 207 Kosmin 2013a.
- 208 Kosmin 2013a.
- 209 *OGIS* 245 = *IGLS* 1184.
- 210 Kosmin 2013a.
- 211 This section builds on the arguments originally presented in Erickson and Wright 2011.
- 212 For the identification of the figure at Nemrud Dag see Sanders 1996, 101, 184–5, 197–8, 237–40.
- 213 Root 1979, 117; Iossif 2011, 254–7.
- 214 See Lintz 2010, 373–6; Harrison 1982, 15.

- 215 See Harrison 1982, 15–32 for the argument that the coins could represent a deity; for the king as the bowman see Root 1979, 164–9; Casabonne 2004.
- 216 Cf. Cohen 1994, 701–2 for the development of Herakles from a Greek bowman to his Scythian bow; for the bow as a coward’s weapon see Eur. *Heracl.* 157–9. See Aesch. *Persians* 147 for the Persian Wars as the contest of the Spear (hoplite) against the Bow; for Greek use of the bow in warfare despite their negative portrayal see Snodgrass 1967, 80–4.
- 217 *DNb* translation: King and Thompson 1907.
- 218 Xen. *Kyr.* 1.2.8–12; Persians as bowmen is a repeated theme in Hdt. cf. 3.30 etc.
- 219 See Bing 1998, no. 55 for bibliography on the continued practice of assigning this coinage to Datames. However, I will refer to the issuer as Tarkamuwa.
- 220 Harrison 1982, 321–36.
- 221 Harrison 1982, 439.
- 222 Root 1979, 116–8.
- 223 The symbolism of the winged-disk remains a controversial point in Achaemenid studies, the general consensus remains that the figure should be identified as Ahuramazda, see Maras 2009; Finn 2011, 225–7; Root 1979, 169–76; Shahbazi 1974; Bailey 1948, 1–77.
- 224 Moysey 1986, 20.
- 225 Personal communication with Vesta Curtis, for the importance of the trouser suit as a Parthian type see: Curtis 1998, 2007b.
- 226 Houghton and Lorber 2002: Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris: nos. 378, 379, 380; Ekbatana: nos. 409, 410; Ai Khanoum: nos. 435, 436, 437, 438, 439.
- 227 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 415, 416, 417, 419, 420.
- 228 The use of the throne for mortals is more common in the Near East than among Greeks. We can see the use of the throne not only on Parthian coinage beginning with Arsakes, but also the Tarkamuwa coinage, and the coinage of the Frataraka Bagdat. See Engels 2013, 44–5 for discussion of the chronology of Bagdat’s coinage. The chair on which Bagdat sits appears to have a back. Neither the seat of Datames or of Arsakes is backed, see Klose and Müseler 2008, no. 2/1, 2/2 for the coinage of Bagdat; see Sellwood 1983, no. 1.1 for an example of the Arsakes throne type.
- 229 However, chariots and horseman usually go to the right. I can see no significant ideological reason for this trend. Obverse images, on the other hand, nearly always face right.
- 230 For a comparison between Persian and Assyrian bows, see Root 1979, 167–8.
- 231 Cohen 1994, 701–2.
- 232 Root 1979, 165–9. The style of the bow on the Tarkamuwa coinage is different from both the normal Achaemenid and Seleukid bow type, but the recurve type is used on both the coinage of the Frataraka and Parthians.
- 233 For a discussion of the appearance of the winged-disk on the coinage of the Frataraka and its lack of connection to Persian kingship see Engels 2013, 40. The disk rarely appears and is usually assigned to the coinage of Vadfradad I, see Klose and Müseler 2008, nos. 2/17, 2/23; Alram 1986, no. 545.
- 234 This may also reflect a desire by the Seleukids not to encroach on the religious authority of the Zoroastrian priests. Engels 2013 argues that the Seleukids may, as they had done in

Babylon, officially promote Persian-style fire temples through their patronage or acceptance of the power of the Frataraka *contra* Hjerrild 1990, 144–7.

235 Brosius 2006, 101.

236 For the argument of direct Parthian descent from Datames see: Curtis 2007a, 415–7.

237 For the use of the title Θεοπάτωρ on Parthian coinage as a deliberate echo of the coinage of the Seleukid king Alexander I Balas see: Gariboldi 2004.

238 The dating for the independence of Parthia is unclear, Andragoras had been appointed by Antiochos II, and therefore the revolt either took place before Antiochos II's death or in the immediate aftermath. The current view argues that the Parni curbed the revolt of the rebellious Seleukid satrap Andragoras. In this early stage, Arsakes would have claimed some loyalty to the Seleukids and may have helped against Ptolemy III. The independence of the Parthians has been questioned by Strootman 2018.

239 See Engels 2013, 57–9 on the shared use of titles between the two series of dynasts.

240 Strootman 2018. See Engels 2013, 57–9 for a similar situation among the Frataraka.

241 Curtis 1998, 66.

242 See Collins 2012 for a comprehensive discussion of Alexander's adoption of Persian dress.

243 Curtis 1998, 66–7; see above on the horned horseman.

244 This coinage became the more common type minted at Magnesia-on-the-Meander under Antiochos II, having first been minted there under Antiochos I.

245 For the Tarkamuwa coinage as a model for the Parthian coinage without Seleukid influence see: Curtis 2007a, 415–7, 2007b, although some Seleukid influence is noted in the omphalos.

246 Shore 1993, nos. 5–20, 24–7, 29.

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Continuity and rebellion

Developments in Seleukid ideology

Like his father before him, Antiochos I had established his sons as joint rulers of the empire before his death.¹ Hence, when Antiochos I died in 262 BC his second son, Antiochos II, had already established himself as king.² For the second consecutive generation, the new senior monarch was immediately faced with external challenges to his rule and a war with Ptolemy.³ What is vital for our study is not Antiochos II's war and its aftermath,⁴ but rather the continuity with his father's iconography. This chapter will argue that there was no shift in the presentation and thus ideology of Seleukid kingship between Antiochos I and II, and that this continued until the reign of Antiochos IV. Unlike the codification of Seleukid imagery that took place under Antiochos I, and his attempt to place his own stamp on Seleukid imagery, Antiochos II continued to produce the iconography of his father, and in some instances, he continued even to mint his father's portrait.⁵ Much like Antiochos I's decision to continue his father's regnal years, a decision repeated by his son and all of their successors, Antiochos II appears to have worked towards the creation of a Seleukid iconography that reflected not only his personal authority but that of the Seleukid kings as a family entity.⁶ It is only through understanding how the Seleukid court repeated and manipulated iconography across generations that we can observe the success and failure of the Seleukid dynasty in creating a visible manifestation of Seleukid royal power. The first two chapters of this book have explored the creation of imagery that varied significantly from the reign of Seleukos I to that of Antiochos I (and even more significantly within the reign of Seleukos I); this chapter will not look at a single individual Seleukid king, but rather more holistically at the empire until the reign of Antiochos IV to pull out patterns which demonstrate the consistent representation of Seleukid power across generations. The reason that this approach is possible is because, as we shall see, Seleukid iconography in this period is remarkably consistent from reign to reign. This suggests that the iconography, and the underlying ideology created during the reign of

Antiochos I, were successful enough in representing Seleukid power that change was unnecessary or undesirable.⁷ Finally, a brief look at some of the rebellious would-be monarchs who were either officials or relatives (both successful and unsuccessful) will give a sense of how entrenched this ideology became and what it meant, at least iconographically, to be a Seleukid king as opposed to a Hellenistic king.

This chapter will be split into three sections, the first section examines the use of Apollo by Antiochos II, Seleukos II, Seleukos III, Antiochos III, Seleukos IV, and the enigmatic Antiochos Soter coinage. The second section examines some of the deviations from the standard Apollo type on silver coinage, including the military coinage of Seleukos II and Antiochos III. It argues that these changes are the result of responses to local contexts and should be seen as part of an overall strategy to develop the power of the king. The final section considers the coinage of the rebels Antiochos Hierax, Molon, and Achaios.

The development of a Seleukid Apollo

Antiochos II

As we shall see, in general Antiochos II further developed the iconography of what can now be called the Seleukid dynastic god, Apollo. The conception of a continuous Seleukid state was presented not only by the deployment of the Apollo-on-the-omphalos reverse but also by the production of coins with the obverse portrait of Antiochos I. As a result of this policy, Antiochos II's coinage can be divided into three distinctive phases based on the obverse. First, coins featuring Antiochos I, second those featuring Antiochos II, and finally the smallest group which feature an unidentifiable young king, either a potential successor or an idealised portrait of one of the Antiochoes. The portraits of the two identifiable kings show a great deal of variety: Antiochos I is represented both as old and young, as well as of an indistinct age – potentially a rejuvenated older king, and finally in what appears to be an intermediate step with features of both the elderly and young portraits. In addition to the differing obverse portraits there are two major subsets of the Apollo-on-the-omphalos type under Antiochos II. Subset A features Apollo holding an arrow and resting his bow at his side. Subset B features Apollo holding a bow in his outstretched arm. Both of these subsets had first appeared

during the reign of Antiochos I, and therefore neither represents a break with the established iconography. Given the differences in appearance between the two types, the different implement held by Apollo may have had some significance as discussed in relation to his image in Babylon rather than just a minor stylistic change.

Apollo-on-the-omphalos type: subset A

Antiochos I Portraits

The choice to continue the Apollo origin myth through coinage demonstrates the success of this dynastic mythology in legitimising Seleukid rule. It appears that Antiochos II's policy was to emphasise dynastic continuity along the lines established by his father. One way in which Antiochos II attempted to do this was through the rejuvenation of his father's image. The image of an elderly Antiochos I was intermittently replaced by a younger more idealised portrait of the king⁸ (Figure 3.1). The rejuvenated portrait of Antiochos I was not only younger, but his features are less stark and more idealised and recall many features of Lysimachos' portraits of Alexander.⁹ The image of Antiochos as an idealised young man contains many of the same elements that appear in the Seleukid imagery of Apollo, most notably his clean-shaven appearance. These portraits attempt to further establish the connection between Antiochos I and his patron and ancestor Apollo and to recall the potent image of Alexander. Intermediate portraits of Antiochos I which possess features of both the idealised king and the elderly king suggest that the rejuvenation of the king was not a coherent empire-wide phenomenon but was instead a gradual process.¹⁰



Figure 3.1 Silver tetradrachm, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, Antiochos II: Antiochos I/Apollo-on-the-omphalos. Yale University Art Gallery. Ruth Elizabeth White Fund. 2004.6.267

Although there is no evidence that Antiochos I was deified posthumously by his immediate successor, it is possible that a cult was established for him in the same manner as the one which he had established for his father.¹¹ The transformation of the image of Antiochos I on his son's coinage reveals an attempt to link the two reigns. As the rejuvenated image brought Antiochos I's image closer in age and appearance to that of his son it glorified both monarchs, thereby stressing dynastic continuity and stability. The rejuvenated portraits of Antiochos I were an attempt to emphasise Antiochos II's connection to his father, as well as representing himself as the legitimate successor. This connection may have been especially important after the death of Antiochos II's elder brother, Seleukos (the former crown prince who was perhaps executed for treason).¹² Although, it is unclear what (if anything) Seleukos had done to warrant his death at his father's orders in 266, it would be logical if Antiochos II sought to create an image of continuity and close support to his father, both while joint ruler and even after his death. Therefore, the rejuvenated and idealised portraits of Antiochos I sought to establish continuity between the two kings, thereby enhancing the legitimacy of Antiochos II.

The Apollo-on-the-omphalos coins which depict Antiochos I on the obverse feature relatively little variety in the portrayal of Apollo. This type appears on gold staters, silver tetradrachms and silver drachms, thus spanning the entire range of high-value coinage issued by Antiochos II. The most common reverse image shows Apollo-on-the-omphalos facing to the left, with slight drapery on his right thigh, holding a single arrow and resting his left hand on a grounded bow.¹³ This image is repeated throughout the entire empire with only a few exceptions which may reflect local concerns.¹⁴

The local nature of various versions of Apollo is most apparent at Sardis, which continued to mint its own unique portrait of the god as it had done under Antiochos I.¹⁵ The coins from Sardis show Apollo, with slight drapery on his right thigh, seated facing left on omphalos, wearing sandals, holding two arrows and resting his left hand on a grounded bow.¹⁶ The sandals are an interesting feature of the Sardis mint and may represent a local version of the god or a particular cult image. The variation between the number of arrows which Apollo held during the reign of Antiochos I is retained only at this mint. While the other mints reduced the number of arrows to one, either for ease of depiction or as part of an ideological programme, perhaps as an allusion to Nabû, Sardis still minted coins with two arrows, although on Newell's *WSM* 1387 Apollo only holds a single arrow.¹⁷ Sardis may represent one of the last holdouts in an iconographic shift towards a single arrow. This may reflect the local nature of the god for Sardis, which is not evident elsewhere.

The coinage of Antiochos II which features the portraits of his father is remarkably consistent with his father's coinage and therefore can best be explained as an attempt to represent dynastic continuity through the continuation of coin types.

Antiochos II Portraits

The reverses of the Apollo-on-the-omphalos type coins which feature the portrait of Antiochos II show the same general variety as those featuring the portrait of Antiochos I. However, the portraits of Antiochos II feature very little variation. The obverse normally depicts the diademed head of Antiochos II facing right, although the portrait lacks the clearly defining features of Antiochos I.¹⁸ The only major variation in the portraits of Antiochos II occurred at Alexandria Troas. The obverse die used at this mint was a recutting of an obverse die from either Abydos or Ilion so that the portrait included a winged diadem¹⁹ (Figure 3.2). This local variation may link Antiochos to Perseus, but it may also be the feature of a local cult. The reasons behind this change are unclear as Antiochos II was not linked to Perseus elsewhere. This is despite the fact that through his role as the mythical founder of the Persian race whom the Seleukids now ruled and married, he was an important Seleukid ancestor.²⁰ MacDonald's proposal that the type depicts an unknown local god or hero who was traditionally represented with wings remains the best interpretation.²¹

The reverse of the Apollo-on-the-omphalos coins normally depicted Apollo with slight drapery on right thigh, seated facing left on omphalos, holding a

single arrow and resting his left hand on a grounded bow.²² However, as under Antiochos I and on the coins of Antiochos II featuring Antiochos I, there was some minor variation in the image. Again these variations were limited to drapery, the number of arrows, and, particularly at Sardis, sandals.²³ The general lack of variation on these coins demonstrates that Antiochos II sought to establish a unified iconography for his rule and that this iconography was closely based on the one established by his father.



Figure 3.2 Silver tetradrachm, Alexandria Troas, Antiochos II: Antiochos II with winged diadem/Apollo-on-the-omphalos.

With permission of wildwinds.com

Unidentified Young King Portraits

Perhaps the most interesting coins minted under Antiochos II are those which depict an unidentified young king on the obverse. These coins feature the standard Apollo-on-the-omphalos reverse and were produced at several mints. The king depicted in these portraits was either an heir to the throne or a rejuvenated Antiochos II. As the portraits lack the deep-set eyes of Antiochos I and the slightly protruding chin of Antiochos II, it is possible that the coinage shows Antiochos II's heir. This would suggest that Antiochos II had appointed a co-ruler as his father and grandfather had done, who would be in a position to appear on his coinage. There is no other evidence for this situation, and the chaos resulting from his death argues against this. Furthermore, the lack of a slightly protruding chin should not rule out a rejuvenated Antiochos II.

In order to help determine the identity of the figure represented we must examine the coins from each individual mint. The obverse of the coins minted at Phocaea features the diademed head of a young king who has horns

beginning at his temple and arching over the ear, facing right.²⁴ If the coinage does in fact represent an heir to Antiochos II the horns are a striking feature as they imply divinity. Therefore, it is more probable that this figure represents a rejuvenated and deified version of Antiochos II that is specific to the mint. As Antiochos II was proclaimed a god by the citizens of Miletos, it is possible that the citizens at Phocaea did so as well. The inability to identify the figure and the fact that idealised, unrecognisable portraits are common during the reign of Antiochos Hierax make it possible that this coinage was minted during the reign of Hierax.

The obverse type from the Alexandria Troas mint features the idealised head of a young king facing right wearing the winged diadem that is specific to the mint.²⁵ This image differs significantly from the certain image of Antiochos II at the same mint; the wing stretches along the diadem rather than coming out from the top. As the winged diadem became a particular feature of Antiochos Hierax coinage it is possible that this type was minted under Hierax. The continuity of the reverse image implies continuity between the reigns of Antiochos I, II, and Antiochos Hierax and served to legitimise the reigns of the latter two kings.

Apollo-on-the-omphalos type: subset B

As a result of Antiochos II's emphasis on dynastic continuity, the image of Apollo shows only relatively minor variations during his reign. The most important variation is that at some mints Apollo holds a bow in his outstretched hand rather than an arrow. If the single arrow held by Apollo is a reference to Nabû, then this change would reflect a serious departure from this syncretistic policy depending on the location of the mints. However, the bow image only appears at mints in Asia Minor. While the inhabitants of the region may have known of the Babylonian god Nabû, they would have had a stronger acquaintance with Apollo. This would have been a result of the long history of Greek settlement particularly on the coast. It is more interesting that the orientation of the bow is not the normal one in Greek art. The bow is held with the string facing away from the archer. This position is neither natural, nor have I been able to locate a similar Greek parallel. It is possible that the bow position was chosen as it fits better on the coin. However, there is a precedent for the image type in Assyrian art.²⁶ If the Assyrian image is in fact the precursor to this version of Apollo, then the reference to a Babylonian deity is replaced by an image with Assyrian origins. One cannot rule out that the Seleukids were unfamiliar with the differences between Babylonian and earlier

Assyrian art which would allow for the Babylonian deity to be depicted with an Assyrian-style weapon. This suggests a continued engagement with the art of the region in a subtle way without overshadowing the dynastic god, Apollo. Furthermore, the image of Apollo-on-the-omphalos holding a single arrow (subset A) created for Antiochos I remained the standard coinage of Antiochos II.

A larger number of mints produced coins of subset A than of subset B, with all of subset B having been produced by mints in Asia Minor. The Antiochos I portraits in subset B show less variety than those in subset A: they either depict the elder king or a rejuvenated portrait of the king. Subset B lacks the intermediate stages of rejuvenation which are present on some subset A coins.²⁷ The reverse images are also less varied than those coins of subset A. The only variant is whether Apollo is nude or has his legs draped. In all of the Antiochos II portrait coins, Apollo is shown with his legs draped. The coins which show Antiochos I on the obverse generally depict a nude Apollo.²⁸ This image of Apollo holding a bow first appeared at Lysimachia, it subsequently became the specialty of the mint at Magnesia-on-the-Meander and the influence of this type seems to have spread through the Meander valley and eventually included southern Ionia and Caria. This type appears to have had a limited circulation in Asia Minor, although the depiction of a seated archer with a bow was revived in Parthian coinage. Nevertheless, this variant seems to have had little effect on how Apollo was viewed within the dynasty. The difference in imagery between holding an arrow and holding a bow is relatively narrow and draws on the same repertoire of hunting and martial imagery, as well as the long tradition of depicting Apollo as an archer.

Overall, Antiochos II's coinage developed the iconography created under his father. While there was some variation in the specific features of the type, the overall image of Apollo-on-the-omphalos dominated Antiochos' coinage.

Seleukos II

Under Seleukos II, the standard Seleukid Apollo type – Apollo-on-the-omphalos – was drastically modified for the first time. This modification became all the more striking when his brother and rival king, Antiochos Hierax, staked part of his claim to dynastic legitimacy on the continued minting of the standard Seleukid type created by their grandfather (see discussion below). Seleukos II's changes to the Seleukid coin type did not extend beyond his reign nor did they undermine his dynastic connection to Apollo, rather they emphasised the different aspects of the god. Whereas

Antiochos II attempted to portray himself as the legitimate successor to his father by continuing his coin types, Seleukos II's coinage represented a clear break with the tradition.

Apollo as ancestor

Despite Seleukos' changes to what had during the reign of his father become the standard emblem of Seleukid association with Apollo, it is only during his reign that we can get indisputable epigraphic evidence of the Seleukid dynastic connection with Apollo.

King Seleukos to the council and the people of Miletos, greeting. Whereas our ancestors and our father have conferred many great benefactions upon your city because of the oracles given out from the sanctuary there of Apollo Didymeus and because of kinship to the god himself and also because of the gratitude of your people; whereas from your other measures taken with reference to our state in the past – these have been pointed out by our father's friends – and from the speech delivered by your envoys Glaucippos and Diomander who brought the holy wreath from the sanctuary with which you had crowned us, we ourselves see that you preserve sincere and firm your esteem for your friends and that you remember the favours which you have received, we approved your policy, and as we both desired and considered it very important to raise [your city] to a more illustrious state and [to increase your present] privileges [in the way you desire]

RC 22 (Translation Welles)²⁹

The confirmation of honours to Miletos must have occurred at the beginning of his reign and was therefore designed to shore up support in the face of Ptolemaic invasion.³⁰ This had parallels in Seleukos I's and Antiochos I's dedications to the city as they sought its support against Lysimachos. The references to his father's friends παραθέντων ἡμῖν τῶμ πατριξῶν φίλων demonstrates that it was early in Seleukos' reign as he still relied on the advice of his father's counsellors. Seleukos II's invocation of his divine lineage through Apollo suggests that, although he changed the image of Apollo on his coins, he maintained the same dynastic view of Apollo.

Seleukos' new Apollo

It is unclear why Seleukos broke with his father's and grandfather's version of Apollo and introduced his own type. While his rival Antiochos Hierax produced more traditional coin types, Seleukos does not appear to have responded to his brother's usurpation of traditional iconography with his new

types. Rather Seleukos' reforms appear at the beginning of his reign. Even accepting Coşkun's new chronology of the war of the brothers being coterminous with the Ptolemaic invasion, we are still faced with Seleukos' reforms preceding Antiochos' rebellion.³¹ Furthermore, Seleukos' new coin image opened the door to Hierax's use of the image and his ability to present himself as the legitimate Seleukid king.



Figure 3.3 Silver tetradrachm, Antioch, Seleukos II: Seleukos II/Standing Apollo. Yale University Art Gallery. 2001.87.12327

Perhaps, the introduction of Seleukos' new image was designed to place him within the tradition of his ancestors while more forcefully placing his own claims to the diadem in the face of threats from his sibling. Seleukos' new image reproduced much of past Seleukid iconography with the major change being the pose: the new type featured his diademed head on the obverse and Apollo **standing** left holding an arrow and resting his elbow on a tall tripod on the reverse (*Figure 3.3*). The reverse type developed the imagery associated with Apollo more fully. The tripod had been used as an Apollo type on a variety of Seleukid bronzes from the reign of Seleukos I and was clearly associated with the mantic abilities of the god. The arrow without the bow may have helped emphasise the potential double interpretation of the arrow as the stylus of Nabû and simply an arrow.

Thus, Seleukos II's new image of Apollo featured the combination of traditional Apollo elements in a new form for Seleukid coinage. The standing image of Apollo may hold a greater connection to statue types than to the traditional Seleukid coin type. Variations of Seleukos II's new personal type were minted on coinage across the portions of the empire which he controlled.³²

Apollo-on-the-omphalos

Despite the overall change in Seleukos' coinage there are a few mints that continued to produce the standard Apollo-on-the-omphalos type. The mint at Ekbatana in particular continued to produce the standard Seleukid type on gold staters, drachms, and tetradrachms.³³ This mint also maintained its preference for an image of Apollo holding multiple arrows rather than a single arrow. Coins of this type were also minted at three other unknown mints.³⁴ The preservation of this type may represent an individual mint's power to mint variations on approved types or the lack of Seleukos II's authority at the start of his reign or a particular local affinity for the traditional type. The independence of the mint at Ekbatana may be shown by its production of the full range of Apollo types during his reign, both standing types and the seated type. One way to interpret Ekbatana's response to Seleukos' new image would be that the change in pose was not significant in ideological terms, that is to say Apollo was the most important figure and his pose was secondary. Susa also produced a variant of the traditional type, but only on bronze coinage.³⁵ It may be notable that only Iranian mints resisted Seleukos' new image.

Seleukos' coinage presents a break of the traditional seated Apollo imagery of his predecessor. However, modern scholarship may have overemphasised how significant this change was, after all this change did not include the introduction of any new iconographic symbols into the repertoire of Seleukid imagery. However, given that his son returns to the traditional Seleukid pattern, Seleukos' coinage stands as an interesting anomaly which may have allowed his brother to more forcefully push his claims to Seleukid legitimacy.

Seleukos III

During his brief reign Seleukos III returned to the traditional Seleukid types inaugurated by Antiochos I and continued by Antiochos II and Antiochos Hierax. The return to this type suggests a connection with his claim to the Seleukid throne. Seleukos III's claim to legitimacy was bolstered by the increasingly hornlike locks of hair that appeared on his head on coinage minted at Antioch, which were designed to suggest an increasing but subtle trend towards the divinity of the living Seleukid king.³⁶ The same trend towards quasi-horned representations of the king also presented itself in the form of small horns shown on coins struck at a temporary subsidiary mint of Antioch³⁷ (Figure 3.4).



Figure 3.4 Silver tetradrachm, subsidiary mint at Antioch, Seleukos III: Seleukos III/Apollo-on-the-omphalos. CNG online auction 103, Lot: 81. www.cngcoins.com

This peculiar hair feature was depicted as full horns at a subsidiary mint of Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris.³⁸ Like his predecessors, Seleukos III's coinage showed some variation, at Seleukeia-on-the-Calycadus a type combined the Apollo symbols of his father, with the traditional seated Apollo: the reverse depicts Apollo with his legs draped seated facing left on the omphalos holding a bow and resting his elbow on a tall tripod.³⁹ Given Seleukos III's very short reign and the suddenness of his father's death,⁴⁰ it is perhaps unsurprising that some of his father's types may have continued to have been produced, which appears to be a case at a lone mint in Mesopotamia.⁴¹

In short, the coinage of Seleukos III did not feature any real innovation; this may be due to his short reign or to the usefulness of retaining a continuous and recognisable dynastic type. This dynastic type always allowed for some variation, but allowed the king to legitimise his rule by having his portrait appear on the obverse with an image of Apollo on the reverse.

Antiochos III

Like Seleukos III, Antiochos III used the now standard Seleukid type of the king's portrait on the obverse and Apollo-on-the-omphalos on the reverse. Since Antiochos III asserted his claim to his reconquered territories based on previous Seleukid conquests the continuation of the traditional Seleukid types should not be surprising.⁴² Both Seleukos III and Antiochos III shared a preference for the reverse types of Antiochos I and II. Both kings largely

ignored the standing Apollo figure adopted by their father and preferred the Apollo-on-the-omphalos type (Figure 3.5).



Figure 3.5 Gold octadrachm, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, Antiochos III: Antiochos III/Apollo-on-the-omphalos. Triton XI, Lot: 292. www.cngcoins.com

This may be a result of the kings' looking back towards a more glorious Seleukid past than the one embodied by their often-embattled father. The codification of the Seleukid iconography by Antiochos I and the recovery of portions of Asia Minor by Antiochos II offered a more appealing precedent to the young kings as they fought to reconstitute the empire. The significance of this imagery as a claim to the Seleukid diadem had already been demonstrated by its use on the coins of their uncle Antiochos Hierax. The abandonment of Seleukos II's type demonstrates that his version of Apollo had not become significant for the dynasty.

While the general motif of Apollo-on-the-omphalos was retained from the reigns of Antiochos I and II, other features which had developed under Antiochos Hierax in Asia Minor were also adopted on the coinage of Antiochos III. This is a significant development as it shows that the types designed for a rebel Seleukid king were taken up into later Seleukid iconography, while the developments of the legitimate king were ignored. The features retained from the coinage of Antiochos Hierax include the marking of the bow grip with pellets, or pellets and a flat disk, as well as the occasional depiction of a compound bow rather than the simple and heroic recurve bow.⁴³ But these additions do not appear to be significant beyond displaying an increasingly realistic and decorative bow type. These types are more common in Asia Minor and Syria than in Mesopotamia and further east and may reflect regional preference.

Seleukos IV

While Seleukos IV appears to have continued reforming the number and location of Seleukid mints, the silver coinage during his reign continues the now established Seleukid image of King/Apollo-on-the-omphalos ([Figure 3.6](#)). Seleukos IV furthers the importance of the mint at Antioch as the most significant Seleukid mint, and there his portrait is fairly consistent and continues some of the iconography of his father (including the hornlike lock of hair).⁴⁴ The one notable development is in the use of subsidiary symbols that for the most part appear to have connotations of military success, notably a wreath at Antioch and the ‘Wreath’ Mint⁴⁵ and a palm branch at Antioch and Ptolemaïs (Ake).⁴⁶ The innovations that took place under Seleukos IV nearly all took place on his bronze coinage in Antioch, there a greater range of deities, including for the first time Dionysus,⁴⁷ were introduced, and most strikingly the first image of a Seleukid queen, Laodike.⁴⁸ Almost all of the bronze coinage carries a martial theme: the prow or stern of a ship, an elephant, Nike, and the Seleukid horned horse ([Figure 3.7](#)). While this may conflict with the general



Figure 3.6 Silver tetradrachm, Ekbatana, Seleukos IV: Seleukos IV/Apollo-on-the-omphalos. Triton V, Lot: 1491. www.cngcoins.com



Figure 3.7 Bronze, Antioch, Seleukos IV: Dionysus/Ship's prow. Yale University Art Gallery. Ruth Elizabeth White Fund. 2004.6.3807

image of Seleukos IV as an inactive king, that his coinage reflects the very features that were forbidden to his father in the West by the treaty of Apamea may have suggested his consideration of the treaty as non-binding on him.⁴⁹

Antiochos Soter coinage

One of the more vexing problems of Seleukid iconography has been determining the issuer of the Antiochos Soter coinage, as it reaffirms much of the ideology of Seleukid kingship we have discussed in this chapter. These coins, which have been long known to numismatists, have defied attempts to definitively fix their origin either to a particular group, a particular time, or even a particular mint. While uncertainty of origin in itself is not unusual, the iconography utilised on the coins as well as their legend make them a particularly interesting challenge.

The most intriguing feature of the coinage is the legend ANTIOXOY ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ. Unusually for the early Seleukid empire, the king is given his cultic epithet on the Antiochos Soter types⁵⁰ (Figure 3.8). For this reason, the coin types with this legend are interesting for how they shape our understanding of early Seleukid kingship ideology. The simplest explanation for the appearance of a portrait of Antiochos I along with his name would be that that coinage was issued during his lifetime. However as has been well established, it is unlikely that this coinage was in fact manufactured during the reign of Antiochos I; rather the evidence argues that the coinage was likely produced posthumously.⁵¹ If this is the case, then based on the dating of hoards of coins containing the type, the most probable time period for the issuing of

these coins was at the latest the tumultuous period following the death of Antiochos II.⁵²



Figure 3.8 Silver tetradrachm, DEL mint, Antiochos II: Antiochos I/Apollo-on-the-omphalos. CNG online auction 350, Lot: 274. www.cngcoins.com

On account of the epithet, the coinage is unique for the Seleukids before the reign of Antiochos IV.⁵³ There also are other features that make the origin of this coinage difficult to determine. The type appears in three denominations that are normally grouped together, gold octadrachms, silver tetradrachms, and a bronze. The gold and silver types are the same, with the obverse depicting the diademed head of Antiochos I facing to the right with a dotted border. Portraits of Antiochos I had been used on the issues of both Antiochos I and Antiochos II. The reverse for both types shows Apollo seated facing left on the omphalos, holding an arrow and resting his left hand on a grounded bow. There are no control or mint marks on either the gold or silver coinage of this type which could help with the determination of the mint or minting authority.⁵⁴ However, the bronze denomination may be related to the type as it shares the same legend, although not the same reverse. The obverse of the bronze type features the diademed head of Antiochos I facing right, while the reverse shows an anchor flanked by the caps of the Dioskouroi (Figure 3.9). The bronze coinage has a control mark: DEL which also appeared on coins minted for Seleukos II and Antiochos III on gold, silver, and bronze coinage.⁵⁵ The combination of the epithet and the Dioskouroi imagery make the coinage an excellent tool for investigating the development of the iconography of Seleukid kingship.



Figure 3.9 Bronze, DEL mint, Antiochos II: Antiochos I/Anchor flanked by the pilei of the Dioskouroi. With permission of wildwinds.com and slaveycoins.com

First, it is clear that whoever produced the type viewed King/Apollo as the image of Seleukid rule. The divine epithet re-enforces the importance of Antiochos I to his descendants, a feature we see recurring on the coinage of Antiochos II and also Antiochos Hierax. If we were to look simply at the legend and the imagery of the coinage, the most logical point of production would have been late in the reign of Antiochos II. It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that, following his death, Antiochos I was deified by his son in the same manner as he had done for his father Seleukos I Nikator.⁵⁶ If we assume that Antiochos I was deified by his son and joined his father in the temple at Seleukeia-in-Pieria,⁵⁷ then it is entirely possible that the coinage was designed to highlight this event and that the Antiochos Soter coinage was designed to commemorate the creation of a new god and his cultic epithet. This would make the Soter coinage parallel to the coinage issued by Antiochos I on his arrival in Sardis where the coinage paired the horned diademed portrait of Seleukos I with the reverse of either the horned horse typical of Seleukos' coinage or Apollo seated on the omphalos.⁵⁸ In this case, we would have numismatic advertisement of the deification of the first two members of the Seleukid house. Unfortunately for this argument, it seems unlikely that this event alone required the significant production of coinage that we see for the Soter coinage, although it is possible. Also, it seems difficult to explain the caps of the Dioskouroi which appear on the bronze coinage within this model, although given the dual nature of the twins they may have been a useful marker of deification.

Perhaps a better explanation has been suggested by Houghton and Lorber when they highlighted the possible Ptolemaic link with the caps of the Dioskouroi.⁵⁹ Since the caps only appear on the bronze and not the silver, they

are an iconographic feature that is often considered secondary to the interpretation of the imagery. While this imagery is important, it does not necessarily follow that the silver coinage and the bronze were initiated at the same time. Rather it would be possible for the silver coinage to have begun to have been produced before the bronze coinage and for both coinages to have continued to be produced together. However, in terms of the iconography, I would propose that we should follow Houghton and Lorber and consider the iconography of the coinage together, with either a single iconographic message or a paired message, with the caveat that the bronze may have built on the existing ideology behind the silver coinage. In this case, the caps of the Dioskouroi became rather significant. While the Dioskouroi were important for the Seleukids, this particular iconography (rather than the gods themselves) does not appear elsewhere on Seleukid coinage. Instead, the caps of the Dioskouroi may have a clearer link with the Ptolemies, in particular with Ptolemaic queens.⁶⁰ The importance of the Dioskouroi as a symbol for the Ptolemaic dynasty and the queens in particular has been recognised elsewhere,⁶¹ which might suggest that the merger of the anchor and the symbolism for a Ptolemaic princess would make for a suitable commemoration for the merger of the two royal houses. It may be possible to push this conjecture slightly further: Hazzard has suggested that the Berenike honoured on Egyptian coinage featuring the caps of the Dioskouroi surrounding the double cornucopia is not in fact Berenike, wife of Euergetes, but instead his sister, Berenike Phernophoros, the wife of Antiochos Theos.⁶² While the coinage is normally assigned to Euergetes' honouring of his wife after her death and deification, as Fulińska points out that there are no other markers of divinity on it, and that the use of the title *Basilissa*, Queen, is rather rare.⁶³ It may be possible to suggest that Euergetes honoured his full sister, perhaps in conjunction with his invasion to 'rescue her',⁶⁴ as the rightful queen, not of Egypt but of the lands controlled by the Seleukid kings. This would fit with the traditional description of Ptolemy's attempt to aid his sister and would explain the lack of titles for Berenike, wife of Euergetes, on the coinage which are so familiar from her and her husband's cult. If this, admittedly speculative, argument is in fact correct, the use of the caps of the Dioskouroi could be seen as a symbol of Berenike, wife of Antiochos II, both on the Egyptian coinage and the Soter bronzes, and their use together with the anchor would highlight the merger of the two houses.⁶⁵ In this case, the bronze coinage produced by Tarsus in Kilikia during the reign of Antiochos II which featured the Dioskouroi and the anchor could also be seen to reinforce this message.⁶⁶ In either interpretation, the Soter coinage provides a clear indication of the importance of the image of Seleukid kingship during a period of transition. This places the coinage firmly within the standard Seleukid image of the third

century.

Conclusions

As can be seen above, the kings who followed Antiochos I to the throne generally reproduced his iconographic representation of the empire on silver coinage.⁶⁷ This repetition of the dynastic image across four generations, and by whoever produced the Antiochos Soter coinage, strongly suggests that the image of Apollo became a significant representation of the kings. Interestingly, even the significant setbacks suffered by Antiochos III at the hands of the Romans did little to disrupt this version of Seleukid power as neither he nor Seleukos IV deviated from the established pattern for silver coinage to any great extent.

Deviation from Apollo

As the preceding section has demonstrated, Apollo became the dominant god on Seleukid silver coinage. For all of the Seleukid kings bronze coinage showed a much more considerable degree of variation. On Seleukid bronzes, a wide range of gods appeared, many of which appear to be connected to a local context. The aim of this section is not to explore the wide variety of bronze coinage, as its primarily localised nature makes it a poor indicator for overarching Seleukid ideology. Instead, this section will focus on three different sets of imagery that demonstrate how this local variety could be linked to overarching Seleukid policy. The first part of this section explores the production of Herakles coinage in a region of Asia Minor during the reigns of Antiochos I and II. The second section explores the use of victory imagery during the reign of Seleukos II. The final part discusses Antiochos III's coinage that appears connected to the movements of the army.

Herakles and Asia Minor

In western Asia Minor, a new image of Herakles was produced during the reign of Antiochos I that differed from the images of the god that were produced in the east of the empire by both him and his father. This coinage appears to be linked to particular circumstances and to a particular region and

was continued by his son Antiochos II. This coinage appears to be reflective of the first Seleukid attempt to create a specific high value silver coinage linked to a particular region, which I argue in the final chapter of this book came to dominate the coinage of Antiochos IV.



Figure 3.10 Silver tetradrachm, Magnesia on Mt. Sipylus, Antiochos I: Antiochos I/Herakles seated on a rock. CNG coin shop, 788403. www.cngcoins.com

The western Herakles is often described as weary or resting after his labours, his face appears far older than the face of the lion-skin capped Herakles. This image which appears on Antiochos' coins at Smyrna or Sardis and Magnesia on Mt. Sipylus⁶⁸ resembles the statue of Herakles Epitrapezios by Lysippos for Alexander (Figure 3.10).⁶⁹ The obverse of these coins shows diademed head of Antiochos I facing right, and the reverse features Herakles seated left on a rock resting his right hand on a club. The coins from Magnesia on Mt. Sipylus are dated by Newell to 263–261 and are perhaps attributable to Antiochos II.⁷⁰ Newell associates the coins to the war with Eumenes.⁷¹ The coins postdate the Galatian wars during which Antiochos is traditionally thought to have earned his cult title *Soter* which he shared with Herakles.⁷² The association between Antiochos I and Herakles was reinforced in western Asia Minor by his son who continued to mint coins of this type always featuring Antiochos I on the obverse.⁷³ The appearance of these coins only in Asia Minor seems to point to a specific local purpose. If Newell is correct and the coins are related to the war with Eumenes then they are a piece of propaganda designed to emphasise Antiochos' role as saviour. These coins may also represent a particular local alliance which continued under Antiochos II.⁷⁴

For Antiochos II the continuation of his father's Herakles coinage stressed dynastic continuity but did so in a more specific manner than the Apollo coinage, as the coinage was limited to a few mints under both kings. The Herakles coinage presented Antiochos II as the legitimate successor to his

father as the protector and saviour of several cities in Asia Minor. Just as Antiochos I had received his divine epithet, *Soter* (Saviour), from the Greek cities; Antiochos II received his, *Theos* (God), from the Milesians.⁷⁵ Thus the Herakles coinage helped continue the tradition of highlighting the king's role as the divine saviour of the cities. This link also helped Antiochos II position himself as the legitimate and worthy successor to his father.

The seated Herakles type coinage all features an obverse image of Antiochos I in various states of rejuvenation discussed at the start of this chapter. The reverse image depicts Herakles seated on a rock facing left and resting his hand on his club.⁷⁶ As with the Apollo-on-the-omphalos subset B coinage, all of the seated Herakles coins were minted in Asia Minor. It seems likely that this coinage was designed to highlight the activity of both Antiochos I and Antiochos II in region.⁷⁷

The literary sources for the reign of Antiochos II come for the most part from Athenaeus and much of it is interested in court gossip which may reveal little about Antiochos' actions and policy. However, these sources remarked on Antiochos' penchant for drunkenness and more importantly his unsavoury reliance on his advisors, particularly the Cypriots Aristus and Themison.⁷⁸ The importance of Themison to Antiochos II may demonstrate some aspects of royal policy, as Themison presented himself as the Herakles of King Antiochos.⁷⁹ This example may provide an interesting glimpse into the presentation of royal power in the empire, especially as it invites comparisons to Demetrios Poliorketes' position at Athens in the midst of the Diadoch wars.⁸⁰ If this is the case, then it is possible that the Herakles coinage issued in Asia Minor was an attempt at self-promotion by Themison of Cyprus.⁸¹

Let us therefore examine what we can learn from the literary accounts. According to Phylarchos, Antiochos was a habitual drunk and therefore left the running of the kingdom to two Cypriots, Aristus and Themison.⁸² While this account may be biased against the Seleukid monarch and pick up on recurrent themes in Athenaeus,⁸³ it seems to provide some valuable information on the importance of Themison to Antiochos II. Elsewhere, Athenaeus provides further information on Themison and his role as the Herakles of Antiochos:⁸⁴

Again Themison of Cyprus, the plaything of King Antiochos, according to Pythermus of Ephesus in the eighth book of his *Histories*, was proclaimed at the festivals not only as Themison of Macedon, but also as the Herakles of King Antiochos. All the inhabitants also sacrificed to him, calling upon him by the name of Herakles-Themison; and whenever any distinguished person offered sacrifice, Themison was always present in person, reclining on a separate couch and clad in a lion's skin; he also carried a Scythian bow and held a club.

Athenaeus 289f-290

This interesting formulation, the 'Herakles of King Antiochos' must elevate

Antiochos to the position of Zeus. This formulation recalls the divine honours that were attributed to Demetrios Poliorketes' lovers at Athens.⁸⁵ In that case Athenaeus preserved the account of two individuals hostile to Demetrios Poliorketes: Demo-charēs, who opposed Macedonian intervention in Athens, and Demetrios of Phalerum:⁸⁶ 'The Athenians built) temples to Aphrodite Leaina and Aphrodite Lamia, also altars, shrines, and libations to Burichos, Adeimantos, and Oxythemis'.⁸⁷ Athenaeus introduced this comment with the statement that this represented 'The Athenians' flattering conduct towards Demetrios Poliorketes'.⁸⁸ The Athenian case clearly represents a case of the *polis* attempting to flatter their overlord by giving honours to his favourites. What differs in this case is the fact that Themison was clearly elevating himself to the level of Herakles, while he remained subordinate to his patron and still managed to praise him. Nevertheless, this was an overt assertion of power by Themison, which may have contributed to the remark preserved in Athenaeus that Antiochos II was too drunk⁸⁹ and therefore left the running of the empire to Themison and his brother. There is no further evidence for this claim, and Antiochos title *Theos* granted by the Milesians suggests an active king.

If the phrase 'the Herakles of King Antiochos' does elevate Antiochos to the level of Zeus then this must be recalled in his Milesian epithet *Theos*. Antiochos II was the first Seleukid king to receive a divine title that was not associated with a specific deity, and the first to receive a clearly divine title while still alive. Seleukos I had been associated both with Zeus (on his coinage and later cult) and Apollo (divine descent); Antiochos I was associated with Apollo (coinage and later cult) and perhaps late in his reign he associated his own victories in this part of Asia Minor with those of Herakles. Appian recorded that Antiochos II received the title *Theos* from the Milesians for slaying their tyrant: 'the second another Antiochos, who was born from the marriage of them (Stratonike and Antiochos I), who received the name *Theos* (God) from the Milesians first of all, since he killed the tyrant Timarchos for them'.⁹⁰ This title does not recall any special attribute of any god, as *Nikator* (Victor) had for Seleukos I and *Soter* (Saviour) had for Antiochos. While *Theos* is the generic word for deity in this formulation it is likely that Themison's formulation 'the Herakles of King Antiochos' was playing on the ambiguity of the word to imply a comparison between Antiochos and the king of the gods. Outside of this specific context, the title retained its ambiguity, allowing for connections with any deity as well as emphasising the king's superhuman nature.

This epithet raises serious questions concerning Antiochos II's divine ambitions and possible cult. The most important question is how widespread the use of this title was during Antiochos' lifetime in the areas outside of where he received it. No living Seleukid monarch used divine epithets on their

coinage until Antiochos IV. Therefore, it is impossible to know how accepted or widespread the title was. If the title was in fact widely circulated, then it would have allowed Antiochos to identify himself with whichever local deity best served his specific propaganda aims. Thus, the title that Antiochos received from the Milesians had the potential for widespread propaganda. However, as it does not appear in surviving evidence outside Appian and the priest list from Seleukeia-in-Pieria (from the reign of Seleukos IV)⁹¹ it does not appear to have been fully exploited.

The relationship between Herakles-Themison and Antiochos did not affect the image of Herakles on Antiochos' coinage, as the image appears the same as it had under Antiochos I, and the image continued to lack the bow which was a prominent feature of Athenaeus' description of Herakles-Themison. This does not preclude the possibility that the Herakles coins also alluded to Herakles-Themison. Therefore it is possible that Themison attempted to utilise the existing Herakles propaganda to enhance his own prestige, *pace* the suggestion of Babelon (who suggested that the appearance of the Herakles type coinage coincided with the emergence of Themison as a favourite of Antiochos II), as the initial introduction of the type predates Antiochos II.⁹² Therefore, the Herakles coinage represented an attempt to link Antiochos I's and Antiochos II's victories in Asia Minor. The production of these tetradrachms at three cities, Myrina, Cyme, and Phocaea, becomes more interesting as they also produced a new type of gold staters. MacDonald has suggested that these two types together suggest an alliance or separate grouping of these cities under Seleukid suzerainty in order to defend against Attalid or Ptolemaic encroachment.⁹³ This thesis fits with an attempt by Antiochos II to maintain control of Asia Minor and to use Herakles imagery to emphasise his rule. Although no direct evidence has been discovered, perhaps Themison had a hand in arranging this alliance.

At three of the five mints that produced the seated Herakles tetradrachms (Myrina, Cyme, and probably Phocaea) a new reverse on gold staters was also introduced. These coins featured the diademed head of a rejuvenated and idealised Antiochos I on the obverse, and Athena standing facing left, holding a filleted palm and Nike crowning the royal name, with a shield resting against Athena's leg on the reverse.⁹⁴ Houghton and Lorber link the victorious symbolism of the Athena *Nikephoros* with the Herakles tetradrachms and the end of the second Syrian war.⁹⁵ Owing to the head of Antiochos I depicted on the obverse, these coins commemorated his victories in Asia Minor and also emphasised Antiochos II's own successes in his war with Ptolemy, in much the same manner as the Herakles tetradrachms. The image of Athena recalls Alexander's gold staters, in that the new type combines Alexander's obverse (helmeted Athena) and reverse (Nike) images with some modifications. The

martial imagery suggested by the shield clearly associates the image with both wars of the Antiochi. The crowning of the name by Nike reinforced the royal power and victory of the Seleukids. The filleted palm recalls the palm in Nike's hand on the Alexandrine staters.⁹⁶ If MacDonald is correct in attributing a defensive alliance to these three cities on the basis of the Herakles coinage,⁹⁷ these gold staters were then issued to emphasise the alliance. An alliance of these three cities would have been a significant expression of local autonomy.⁹⁸ However, this alliance appears to be presented in terms which suggest loyalty to Antiochos II. This coinage appears to have been produced with a specific purpose, the repulsion of Ptolemaic and perhaps Pergamene forces, while at the same time, through the use of the portrait of Antiochos I, emphasises dynastic continuity. So while on the surface this coinage appears to represent a break in the otherwise coherent dynastic image formed by the rest of Antiochos' coinage, the coinage should be seen in light of local circumstances and as continuing to present the power of the dynasty.

The combined images of the weary Herakles and the Athena Nikephoros provided the kings with a coherent image of victory in the region. At a series of related mints we can see an iconographic programme that highlights the power of the king and his association with the gods, even if we accept the importance of Themison. This coinage therefore presents the same message of dynastic continuity as the Apollo-on-the-omphalos coinage produced elsewhere. Themison's portrayal of himself as Herakles along with this coinage raise interesting questions of how closely connected the iconography of Seleukid coins is to the situation at court. However, the continuing of the legend in the name of Antiochos hides any unambiguous reference to Themison. As we also have no literary evidence for his desire for independent power, it is impossible to determine whether or not he had any effect on the coinage and the coinage's clear similarities to that of Antiochos I's Herakles coinage suggests he had little influence. The lack of a clear reference to Themison is especially important in this case, as Antiochos II could have equally benefited from the message that seems to be proclaimed by this coinage without interference from Themison. The coinage therefore can be examined in the same way as the rest of the royally inspired coinage, in that it originated from the court in the form of instructions and it was Themison who would have used the existing coinage in attempt to enhance his prestige rather than an independent development.

Seleukos II's victory imagery

In a similar way to the Herakles coinage, Seleukos II's military and victory images appear to relate to particular campaigns by the king. This provides a useful model to see how the Seleukid kings could utilise particular subsets of their coinage, without breaking from the overall dynastic image, to promote their particular achievements. Given Seleukos' difficulties in safely establishing his power, and the numerous successes he had in repulsing various invaders, it is not perhaps surprising that he produced a variety of coin types that emphasised precisely this. As should be expected all of these types feature images of Seleukos II on the obverse. These types can be divided into three broad groups based on their reverses. The first group features either a horse or a horseman, the second group features elephant imagery, the third group features Nike.

Group I (horse/horseman type)

The horseman type coins were issued by Seleukos II at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris and at a mint associated with Antioch. These coins simultaneously recall the horned-horseman tetradrachms of Seleukos I, which would have continued to circulate. Furthermore, it also exploited the traditional imagery of the Macedonian cavalry. The type from the mint associated with Antioch features the diademed head of Seleukos II facing right on the obverse and the king on horseback in Macedonian dress charging left with his spear ready ([Figure 3.11](#)).⁹⁹ This large denomination bronze coin type reinforces the victorious martial imagery of the king. The coins issued at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris suggest the same interpretation, but linked Seleukos II more closely with his grandfather and implied his divinity. The obverse of these two bronze denominations feature the diademed and draped bust of Seleukos II facing three-quarters left with bull horns. The reverse features Seleukos on horseback facing right spearing a fallen enemy ([Figure 3.12](#)).¹⁰⁰ This type clearly demonstrates Seleukos II's martial prowess. This successful encounter on the reverse may have provided Seleukos the opportunity to deify his portrait on the obverse through the use of bull horns. Bull horns had first appeared on Seleukid coinage on the helmeted figure of Seleukos I.¹⁰¹ Later when Seleukos I was deified, he was represented with bull horns on the coinage of Antiochos I.¹⁰² This may have been part of a larger attempt by Seleukos to connect his image to that of his ancestor Seleukos I. The use of bull horns on this bust may also have been related to the increased emphasis on ancestor cults under Seleukos II.¹⁰³



Figure 3.11 Bronze, Antioch, Seleukos II: Seleukos II/King charging on horseback. Yale University Art Gallery. 2001.87.15296



Figure 3.12 Bronze, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, Seleukos II: three-quarters facing Seleukos II/King on horseback spearing a fallen enemy. Yale University Art Gallery. 2001.87.11271

Another of the horseman types was produced in two series at a mint associated with Antioch. This type features the diademed head of Seleukos II facing right on the obverse and a horse trotting left with two stars above on the reverse.¹⁰⁴ The second series of this type adds a shield, often with the Seleukid anchor emblazoned on it, below the horse on the reverse.¹⁰⁵ The horse may represent the Seleukid cavalry or more generally Seleukid martial prowess as on the type also produced at the mint showing the mounted king with his spear. The stars still need to be explained. The stars may associate the horse with the Dioskouroi who are often portrayed with horses and with stars above them. If the stars are interpreted in this way, then the suggestion of martial victory is stronger. The shield on the second series of this coinage clearly associates the image with a Seleukid martial theme. Another possible interpretation is that the stars are meant to suggest that the horse is a constellation and therefore represents Pegasus. However, as Pegasus already

appears on coins at this mint, this suggestion seems less likely. Perhaps the stars were connected to some unknown astronomical event that was felt significant enough to be recorded on the coinage, although we have no record of such an event during the reign of Seleukos II.¹⁰⁶

Group II (elephant)

The second group of martial victory coinage also clearly represented Seleukos II's attempt to portray himself as victorious. These coins made use of one traditional Seleukid emblem of military power, the Indian war elephant. The most traditional of these types was probably minted at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris and features a draped bust of Seleukos II inclined slightly to the left crowned by a figure of Nike on his right. The reverse features the head of an elephant facing right.¹⁰⁷ The appearance of Nike crowning the king on the obverse is rather surprising as additional figures besides the portrait on the obverse are rare. Images linked to the bust, such as the quiver and bow of Apollo, occasionally appear to help identify the figure.¹⁰⁸ The figure of Nike crowning the king creates an instantly recognisable image of victory. The other types feature differing obverses and a new reverse image. On bronze coins from Susa Seleukos II appears diademed with bull horns facing three-quarters right,¹⁰⁹ at Ekbatana he appears more traditionally in profile, although he sports the beard likely associated with his Parthian campaign¹¹⁰ (Figure 3.13).

Athena in a crested helmet also appears on the obverse of this new reverse at Ekbatana.¹¹¹ The new reverse for all of these types features an elephant accompanied by its mahout. The elephant faces right at Ekbatana and left at Susa. This reverse shows elephants with their attendants likely as a symbol of Seleukid military power. The beard on these types is usually linked to the Parthian campaigns,¹¹² and appears on various other obverse images. The elephant with mahout image likely came from the same campaign. The horned bust implied Seleukos II's divinity as well as linking him to Seleukos I. As with the horseman imagery the elephant imagery recalled Seleukos I's successes, particularly the 500 elephants he received from Chandragupta and used at Ipsos. The mahout who had not previously appeared on Seleukid coins must imply that these were Indian elephants given their attendants.



Figure 3.13 Bronze, Ekbatana, Seleukos II: three-quarters facing Seleukos II/Elephant. Yale University Art Gallery. 2001.87.12329

Group III (Nike)

The final martial victory type is the easiest to identify and dates to Seleukos' eastern campaign. On bronzes from Susa a draped Seleukos II features a full pointed beard and wears a diademed *kausia*.¹¹³ This image presents a mixed cultural vision of the king. The *kausia*, the traditional flat hat of the Macedonians,¹¹⁴ identifies the king as Macedonian, while the pointed beard is either oriental or goes back to traditional Greek imagery before Alexander. Perhaps Seleukos II's use of the cap also serves as a reminder of the story in Arrian in which Seleukos saves Alexander's cap from falling in the river which suggests his future kingship, although such a reference is rather obscure.¹¹⁵ The reverse image shows Nike holding a wreath in a *biga* going left. This is an unmistakable image of victory. The other type minted at both Susa and Nisibis features a diademed, bearded portrait of Seleukos II on the obverse and Nike facing left holding a wreath and a palm branch.¹¹⁶ This shows a traditional image of victory which the beard of Seleukos links to his Parthian campaign.¹¹⁷

Two other types portray more ambiguous martial imagery. At Ekbatana a silver diobol was minted for the first time since the reign of Seleukos I. This type featured a bridled horse head on the obverse and a bow in a bow case and quiver on the reverse.¹¹⁸ This type has strong links to Seleukos I as the bridled horse recalls his bridled horned horse. The bow has a variety of potential interpretations; the bow can be associated with the archer Apollo, or as a typical weapon of Herakles, or finally the bow can also represent the most important Persian weapon and may have had royal connotations.¹¹⁹ This latter

interpretation may be the most relevant as the coins were minted in the heart of the old Persian empire. The second type minted at Ekbatana and Susa feature Seleukos II with a beard (Ekbatana) or long sideburns (Susa) on the obverse and a bow in a bow case combined with a horizontal quiver.¹²⁰ This type suggests the same message and may have been an attempt by Seleukos to acknowledge his Iranian supporters for their help in his Parthian campaigns.

All of these martial types appear to be associated with Seleukos II's eastern campaign. Regrettably, we are unable to link them with any particular victory or events on the campaign as the details of the campaign are poorly known. From interpreting the images on these coins, we may gather that Seleukos had some success in the campaign, or at least felt it necessary to advertise the claim of military success. However, as Baktria and Parthia may have been effectively independent after the campaign, it is difficult to assess what long-lasting success he may have had. This may have inclined the king to make more use of the imagery of Seleukos I who had been so successful in the region, but also had to make light of a defeat at the hands of Chandragupta.

Antiochos III and the army

Antiochos III's non-Apolline bronze coinage normally appears to have had a military current, in a similar way to the coinage of Seleukos II. These show considerable variety and some may be linked to specific events, although only with considerable caution. Antiochos III also minted generic victory types, as did all previous Seleukid kings, which feature Nike holding a palm branch on the reverse.¹²¹ The obverses of these types feature either Apollo, Antiochos III, or Antiochos III as Apollo on the obverse. The significance of the reverse image is even clearer at Antioch, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, and Susa, where Nike crowns the royal name.¹²² The type at Susa also relates to Antiochos III's divinity by including horns on Antiochos III's portrait. All of these types clearly represent Seleukid military victory.

The most prominent of this non-Apollo bronze coinage of Antiochos III was his elephant coinage. Like earlier Seleukid elephant coinage, this coinage was clearly connected with his military campaigns in the East and in Koile Syria. The tradition of the elephant as a Seleukid military symbol goes back to the reign of Seleukos I. Antiochos III's elephant coinage has two general types: one features Antiochos III's portrait on the obverse and an elephant on the reverse;¹²³ the other features Apollo on the obverse and an elephant on the reverse.¹²⁴ Features of the two types were combined at Uncertain Mint 59

where Antiochos III wears the laurel crown of Apollo and is depicted as the god.¹²⁵ This deliberate conflation of the two represents the close links fostered by Antiochos III between himself and his divine patron. One of Antiochos' innovations in his coinage is that the elephant type coinage was not restricted to bronze. At a range of mints, the elephant type appeared on silver coinage with the portrait of Antiochos III.¹²⁶ Furthermore, at the 'Rose' mint the type appeared on a gold stater.¹²⁷ Despite this innovation of Antiochos in the value of the metal with elephant types, Seleukos I had already minted similar elephant types. Thus, Antiochos III's return to the use of elephants connects him to his ancestor and to his successful creation of the empire.

These examples demonstrate how the Seleukid kings could use a range of imagery that emphasised their own personal power in specific mints across the empire. For Antiochos I and II the production of the weary Herakles type appears to have been linked to the king's defence of the region against invaders. For Seleukos II, perhaps in light of the numerous campaigns he undertook against invaders and rebels, the martial image of the king constantly on campaign played a significant role in his re-establishment of Seleukid power. Antiochos III continued the focus on military types, with a broad range of coinage that featured elephants.

Rebels, usurpers, and Seleukid kingship

If the Seleukids were successful in establishing a coherent image of what it meant to be a Seleukid king, then it becomes useful to see how those who sought to assume that title utilised imagery. Furthermore, kingdoms that broke away in areas that had previously produced Seleukid coinage provide a useful counterbalance to understanding Seleukid imagery. Chrubasik has recently argued exactly this: '[U]surpers' coinage allows us to see an element of the usurpers' political programme: it was one aspect of their consciously constructed royal image which they wanted to distribute to their audiences, literally in the coin-pouches of their troops'.¹²⁸ This section will examine several rebels who proclaimed their own power within the Seleukid empire, Antiochos Hierax, Achaios, and Molon, all of who claimed some share of the empire, before we turn to the break-away kingdoms of Baktria and Parthia.

Antiochos Hierax

Unlike the majority of the other rebels and potential usurpers faced by the Seleukid kings,¹²⁹ Antiochos Hierax was the son of a previous Seleukid king and therefore could legitimately claim that he had some right to succeed his father.¹³⁰ Therefore, it is questionable as to whether Hierax should even be considered a rebel and not a legitimate Seleukid king.

Coşkun has proposed a new chronology of both the 'War of the Brothers' and the Third Syrian War.¹³¹ This new chronology allows for a new interpretation of Hierax's status as a rebel and as a usurper. A brief summary of the new proposed chronology may be helpful. In April–May 246, Seleukos II, Antiochos Hierax, and their sister Apame were in Babylon likely attending or participating in the Akitu festival on behalf of their father.¹³² Seleukos II was also recognised as joint regent in the normal fashion sometime in the spring. In early September, Babylon heard that Antiochos II had died and Seleukos II was recognised as sole king. The presence of the two male children of Laodike and the connection to the Akitu festival and Seleukos' immediate accession suggest that they were not excluded from the royal court but remained as the rightful successors. The movement of Hierax in this period is difficult to reconstruct but Coşkun associates him with Alexander in Sardis in September.¹³³ One problem not yet accounted for in this new chronology is the coinage of Seleukos II that is normally assigned to Sardis.¹³⁴ This coinage is rather significant in scale, particularly given the limited duration that Seleukos controlled the city on the traditional chronology. That he is excluded entirely by his uncle would require a new attribution for the coinage. While it should be possible that Alexander who controlled the city continued to mint coinage for Seleukos, even as he opposed him, the coinage from Sardis already shows the innovative types of Seleukos II and the abandonment of the seated Apollo type, which suggests some form of control or at least awareness of Seleukos' coin types by the minting authority in the city. Unfortunately, there has not been a complete die study which might help shed light on this issue and as such remains unresolvable. The rest of Seleukos' coinage in Asia Minor is similarly difficult to align with this new chronology, although the idea that individual cities continued to mint for what they perceived to be the rightful Seleukid king during a period of uncertainty is not impossible.

Seleukos' movement is easier to follow: after being confirmed king, he moves westwards with an army, so that he was on his way to Ionia when hearing of his father's death. Thus in 246 Seleukos and Antiochos Hierax are active in Babylonia and Asia Minor respectively.

Under this reconstruction, Seleukos had already been named king and recognised as such in Babylon before his father's death. Accordingly, we should reject the repudiation of Laodike suggested by Porphyry¹³⁵ and not assume that Berenike's child was the designated successor. Coşkun suggests

that this arrangement was accepted at Antioch, at least until news arrived of Seleukos II's supposed death at Ankyra and the subsequent Ptolemaic invasion in September–October 246.¹³⁶ Under this version of events, Antioch remained loyal to Seleukos and his partisans either kept Berenike under house arrest from July until October or had her killed in the same period. The main areas of conflict were Asia Minor and Mesopotamia.

Ptolemy Euergetes, according to both the traditional and Coşkun's chronology, arrived in Antioch in early October and was welcomed into the city.¹³⁷ He reached Babylon by late December 246 and returned to Egypt by August 245.¹³⁸ Following his return to Egypt, Ptolemy left behind a varied group of men in charge of the regions under his control. If we follow the account in Porphyry then Ptolemy gave over Kilikia¹³⁹ in mid-245 to be governed by his friend Antiochos.¹⁴⁰ As Coşkun has suggested, it is likely that this friend of Ptolemy was Hierax who had already opposed his brother in Asia Minor in the previous year.

Staying with the new chronological narrative, in mid-245 Ptolemy returns to Egypt leaving Xanthippos in charge of the campaign against Seleukos on the eastern side of the Euphrates and Antiochos (Hierax) to continue the conquest of Kilikia. Seleukos campaigned successfully against Xanthippos and defeated him in late 245 or early 244.¹⁴¹ After this, Seleukos should have been able to move quickly to recapture the Seleukis.¹⁴² However, it seems that he was unable to do so and his progress was hindered by Ptolemaic forces. Coşkun suggests that Ptolemy allowed Hierax to move into the region as he withdrew his own forces and that Hierax was able to hinder Seleukos for a further two years.

The evidence for Hierax's control of the Seleukis is slim, amounting to a passage in Strabo (*Geographica* 16.2.14) in which during the war between Hierax and Seleukos the people of Arados sided with Seleukos. Furthermore, they had agreed with Seleukos that they could freely harbour refugees, but not let them leave without his permission.¹⁴³ According to Strabo, those who fled to Arados were generally wealthy and possessed significant status. Thus, the choice of Arados, away from the other major courts, suggests the possibility of conciliation with Seleukos.¹⁴⁴ As Coşkun sees this treaty as beneficial to Seleukos and detrimental to Hierax, he proposes that the main area of dispute between the two brothers was near the city. Accordingly, he argues that Hierax was allowed by Ptolemy to control the Seleukis in his stead and that he was able to control Antioch until either 243 or 242,¹⁴⁵ giving him up to two and half years in control of the city. Hierax then flees back into Asia Minor and suffers a series of defeats in Mesopotamia. It is now that the two brothers reconcile, with Seleukos paying a steep price for his brother's cooperation before turning his attention towards Ptolemy. Seleukos agreed to a partition of

the empire with Hierax and confirms him as king.¹⁴⁶

This new chronology casts Hierax first as a usurper and then as a legitimate Seleukid monarch. It is interesting, therefore, that Hierax' coinage always presents him as a legitimate Seleukid sovereign. In contrast to the innovations made by his brother, the coinage of Antiochos Hierax clearly reflects his continuation of the coin types of both his father and grandfather (Antiochos II and I). Hierax minted mostly silver tetradrachms which featured the obverse portrait of one of the three kings named Antiochos (I, II, and Hierax) and the standard Seleukid Apollo-on-the-omphalos reverse.¹⁴⁷ This coinage stands in marked contrast to the contemporary coinage of his brother who had introduced a new standing Apollo type. Hierax's Apollo was far more traditional and is often difficult to differentiate from that of his predecessors. This similarity would only have served to emphasise his position as a legitimate Seleukid monarch. The only major change was that Apollo's bow often became more decorated on the grip and was occasionally depicted as a compound bow rather than a recurve bow.¹⁴⁸ This change did not change the overall composition of the image. The obverse image varied greatly and appears to reflect a desire by Hierax to strongly associate himself with his father and grandfather. The obverse portraits can be broken into three categories, although there is some variation within each category. These categories are portraits of Antiochos I, portraits of Antiochos II, and finally portraits of a young king or of Hierax. The identification of many of the portraits is unclear as they are often highly idealised or lack the distinctive characteristics of an individual king. The similarity of reverse types and the continued minting of his predecessors' portraits clearly placed Hierax in the traditions of his ancestors, Antiochos I and II. And it seems very likely that Hierax did put his own stylised portrait (that clearly made him his father's son) on coinage. This appeal to a Seleukid royal image may also have helped ease some of the tensions of a Seleukid prince having been supported by a Ptolemaic king.

One of the interesting features of Antiochos Hierax's coinage is the continued use of the winged diadem which had first appeared on the coinage of his father¹⁴⁹ (Figure 3.14). The winged diadem appeared on portraits of Antiochos I and of a young king (probably Hierax) at Alexandria Troas, Hierax's principal mint.¹⁵⁰



Figure 3.14 Silver tetradrachm, Alexandria Troas, Antiochos Hierax: Antiochos I with winged diadem/Apollo-on-the-omphalos. CNG coin shop, 974192. www.cngcoins.com

The winged diadem also appears on portraits from Ilion, Lampsakos, and perhaps Abydos.¹⁵¹ It is possible that the winged diadem was a representation of some local cult for Antiochos I and perhaps Antiochos II or Hierax. Although as Antiochos I was the king usually represented, a cult for Antiochos I is the most credible. However, the large variety in level of idealisation in the Antiochos I portraits suggests that the portraits did not come from a single master source. The portraits suggest some type of deification for the monarchs at least at Alexandria Troas, although the form it took is unknown.

Also interesting in terms of Hierax's coinage is the lack of bronze. This seems to confirm that his coinage was strongly connected to his military campaigns both before and after his agreement with his brother. This may have made it all the more significant that he portrayed himself in the image of his popular father and grandfather. Through his coinage, Hierax portrays himself as a typical Seleukid king in the model of his father and grandfather. This contrasts with the images produced by his brother who transformed the Seleukid reverse. So, while Hierax may have begun his reign as a usurper or a rebel, he adhered closely to what could be defined as the Seleukid royal image as befit his claims to that kingdom.

Achaios and Molon

The two usurpers in the reign of Antiochos III, Achaios and Molon, both took a different approach to legitimising their kingship through their coinage. Neither adopted the Seleukid model of coinage and both produced coinage that affirmed a different version of their power. Chrubasik rightly argues that both

kings based their kingship on their personal success rather than family prowess,¹⁵² much like the first generation of successors.



Figure 3.15 Silver tetradrachm, Sardis: Achaïos: Achaïos/Athena Alkis. With permission of wildwinds.com, ex Gemini I, lot 204 (2005)



Figure 3.16 Bronze, Sardis, Achaïos: Apollo/Eagle. Yale University Art Gallery. 2004.6.3820

Unlike Antiochos Hierax, Achaïos the Younger¹⁵³ had a less direct claim to the Seleukid throne. Although he had at first resisted the offer of the diadem,¹⁵⁴ Achaïos claimed it in Laodikeia on the Lykos in 222.¹⁵⁵ This followed on his successful campaigns in Asia Minor which undoubtedly influenced his decision to take the diadem.¹⁵⁶ This decision was quickly followed by the production of a new coin type that differed significantly from previous Seleukid imagery. Achaïos produced a large number of coins at his only mint, Sardis, in all three metals. The gold and silver featured his bearded portrait on the obverse and an Athena reverse: the gold staters depicted an Archaistic Athena advancing left with a spear and shield on the reverse; the silver tetradrachms show Athena Alkis with a spear and shield embla-zoned

with an anchor (Figure 3.15). There were also four bronze denominations featuring: Apollo/Eagle (two denominations) (Figure 3.16), Apollo/Tripod, and Apollo/Horse Head.¹⁵⁷ This coinage featured both a distinctive break from Seleukid imagery, in terms of the portrait, legend, and reverse; but also featured some links to the Seleukid house, in the anchor and the bronze denominations in their use of Apollo.¹⁵⁸ Houghton and Lorber link the portrait of the bearded Achaïos to the portrait of Philip V, and the inclusion of Athena Alkis to the Antigonid dynasty.¹⁵⁹ The reflection of Philip V's imagery may have been a deliberate choice to orientate Achaïos away from the Seleukids but also to associate himself with Attalos' other enemy in Asia Minor. Thus, Achaïos could claim equality with Philip, as well as with Antiochos. The strength of his claim may be reflected in Polybios' list of new rulers that took power in 222/221.¹⁶⁰ Although Achaïos had a family connection to the Seleukid house, it appears that he chose to mostly disregard that element in his presentation and instead looked elsewhere for a model of coinage to legitimate his rule. Unlike Antiochos Hierax who stayed within the bounds of Seleukid kingship, Achaïos defined himself as a new king who conquered territory in his own right, rather than an heir to the Seleukid empire.

The other of Seleukos III's *philoï* who attempted unsuccessfully to break away from Antiochos III was Molon. Molon, his brother Alexander, and Artabazanes, prince of Atropatene, all rebelled when Antiochos left Babylon for Antioch.¹⁶¹ As we can see from his coinage, Molon declared himself king and lead a briefly successful kingdom, in which he controlled the mints at Ekbatana, Susa, and Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris which he captured in 221.¹⁶² As with the coinage of Achaïos, it appears that there was a concerted effort by Antiochos III's court to recall and remind the coinage of the usurper, but enough examples remain to suggest a fairly significant production.¹⁶³ Of his coinage, only examples of bronzes from Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris and Ekbatana remain and silver tetradrachms from Susa. The bronze coinage employs traditional Seleukid types: Zeus/Apollo Kitharoidos at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris (Figure 3.17); Apollo/Nike with palm branch crowing the royal name (Ekbatana).¹⁶⁴



Figure 3.17 Bronze, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, Molon: Zeus/Apollo Kitharoides. Yale University Art Gallery. Ruth Elizabeth White Fund. 2004.6.3811

The reverse type at Ekbatana is similar to that of the tetradrachm produced at Susa, there Nike crowns a trophy.¹⁶⁵ This reverse recalls the reverse of Seleukos I produced in Susa.¹⁶⁶ In [chapter one](#), I argued how the production of this type fit into the development of a model of Seleukid kingship separate from Alexander's kingship. The same notion of victory and the establishment applies again to Molon. This is reinforced as he introduced his own portrait and his own name in the legend.

Both Achaïos and Molon created a new set of images when they declared themselves kings, in what was clearly a deliberate attempt to define themselves against Seleukid authority. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this is most evident on their silver and gold coinage which would have been used to pay their armies. Both new kings retain more traditional Seleukid imagery, although in new combinations, on their lower-value bronze coinage. Given the fiduciary nature of bronze coinage, this may have helped with its continued acceptance in a period of considerable upheaval. As Chrubasik clearly demonstrated, both kings derived much of their legitimacy through their personal success (which rested on the support of their armies) but were not entirely free from the influences of the Seleukid definition of kingship and imagery.¹⁶⁷ As a result, the lack of innovation in Antiochos III's coinage which we examined at the start of this chapter may have been a reaction to both the problems faced by his father Seleukos II and also the assertion of new royal challengers that he needed to completely suppress.

Notes

¹ Trog. *Prol* 26.; See Holton 2018 for an argument on the traditional view of a revolt.

- However, Del Monte 1995, 1997, 1:37, 228, followed by Savalli-Lestrade 2003, 73 argued that Seleukos, the eldest son of Antiochos I, neither revolted from his father nor was he executed, but rather that he fell terminally ill. As a result of this illness his brother, Antiochos II, was appointed prior to his death. This created the complex situation of three ruling kings (rather than two) for the period 268 to 266 Corsten 1997 = I.Laodikeia no. 1.
- 2 *OGIS* 222 = Austin 2011, no. 143.
 - 3 Grainger 2010, 117ff.
 - 4 For which see Grainger 2010, 117ff.
 - 5 See below for detailed discussion of the Antiochos I portraits excluding the Antiochos Soter coinage. See also Erickson 2018b.
 - 6 It is interesting to note that Ptolemaic attempts to portray dynastic continuity differed significantly as for silver tetradrachms the portrait of Ptolemy I and the eagle reverse continued to be used for most of the dynasty, therefore continuity was stressed both in terms of king and dynastic image, rather than simply dynastic image. See Svoronos 1904; Mørkholm and Kromann 1974; Mørkholm 1991, 63–70, 101–11; Hazzard 1995.
 - 7 Ptolemaic coinage develops a similar dynastic image much earlier, as Ptolemy II adopts many of the coin types of his father.
 - 8 Houghton and Lorber 2002, 169.
 - 9 Houghton and Lorber 2002, 196.
 - 10 E.g. Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 499.
 - 11 For the question of whether or not a Seleukid central cult was created now, or during the reign of Antiochos III, see Erickson 2018a for the argument that no centralised cult was created for the deified kings.
 - 12 See note 1.
 - 13 Houghton and Lorber 2002: Gold staters: Myrina: no. 499; Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris: no. 586; tetradrachms: Lysimachia: no. 482; Alexandria Troas: no. 490; Aegae: no. 495; Phocaea: no. 508; Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris: no. 587; Alexandria-in-Aria (Artacoana): no. 612; Uncertain Mint 33, probably Far Eastern: no. 615; Ai Khanoum: no. 617; Drachms: Phocaea: no. 513; Unattributed Issues of Western Asia Minor: no. 556; Alexandria-in-Aria (Artacoana): no. 613; Alexandria-in-Aria (Artacoana) or imitation: no. 614; Ai Khanoum: no.619.
 - 14 This standard reverse type was modified at a Hellespontine mint (perhaps Lampsacus), at Alexandria-in-Aria (Artacoana), and at Sardis. The Hellespontine mint differs only slightly from the more common type in that Apollo is nude: (Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 484–5). Apollo was also depicted in the nude on one of the 12 dies used by Alexandria-in-Aria, the other 11 dies used at the mint show Apollo with a draped right thigh: Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 612.12. The nudity of Apollo places him more firmly in the model of an idealised Greek youth, and perhaps ties into the rejuvenation of Antiochos I. That only one of the 12 dies that were used to strike this coinage at Alexandria-in-Aria featured a nude Apollo suggests that this variation was relatively unimportant and did not reflect a major shift in iconography. The use of a purely Greek representation of Apollo at a Hellespontine mint demonstrates that the Apollo coinage could reflect the local views of Apollo, in this case the purely Greek deity. Whereas, the general preference for drapery may suggest an image that was relevant to the non-Greek populations which did not normally depict men or gods in the nude.

- 15 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 324 (two arrows) and 325 (one arrow).
- 16 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 518.
- 17 Newell and Mørkholm 1977, no. 1387.
- 18 Most notably the very deep eye socket.
- 19 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 491.
- 20 See Ogden 2017, 50–2 for the familial connections with Perseus, also the discussion of the Medusa/bull coinage in chapter one.
- 21 MacDonald 1903, 102.
- 22 Houghton and Lorber 2002: Gold staters: Aegae: no. 494; Antioch-on-the-Orontes: no. 570; Ekbatana: no. 606; Ai Khanoum: no. 616; tetradrachms: Lysimachia: no. 483; Abydus: no. 487; Ilium: no. 488; Scepsis: no. 493; Aegae: no. 496; perhaps Tralles: no. 534; perhaps Bargylia: no. 549; Unattributed Issues of Western Asia Minor: nos. 554–5; Tarsus: no. 563; Antioch-on-the-Orontes: no. 571; Uncertain Mint 28, Western, probably in Syria or Northern Mesopotamia: no. 577; Uncertain Mint 29, probably in Northern Mesopotamia: no. 579; Uncertain Mint 30, Western, probably in Northern Mesopotamia: no. 580; Uncertain Mint 31, probably in Northern Mesopotamia: no. 582; Carrhae, Edessa, or Rhessaena: no. 583; Unattributed Issue: no. 639; Alexandria Troas: no. 491; drachms: perhaps Tralles: no. 535; perhaps Bargylia: no. 550; Tarsus: Houghton and Lorber 2002: no. 564; Uncertain Mint 28, Western, probably in Syria or Northern Mesopotamia: no. 578; Uncertain Mint 30, Western, probably in Northern Mesopotamia: no. 581; Ekbatana: no. 608; Ai Khanoum: no. 618; Hemidrachms: Ai Khanoum: no. 620.
- 23 At Sardis the sandals continued to appear, but Apollo now holds only a single arrow: Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 519. The peculiar image of Apollo wearing sandals was copied by the mint at Tarsus: Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 561–2. The change at Tarsus may have been due to the prominence of the Sardis type rather than the influence of a local cult. Ekbatana reinstituted a variant of the type by minting tetradrachms on which Apollo held three arrows. It also minted bronzes that may have included multiple arrows: Houghton and Lorber 2002: tetradrachm: no. 607, bronze: no. 611. Finally, the Hellespontine mint (perhaps Lampsacus) minted coins which featured a nude version of Apollo, as it did on the Antiochos I obverse coins minted under Antiochos II: Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 486.
- 24 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 514.
- 25 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 492. For a study of the coins and their assignment see: MacDonald 1903, 92–116.
- 26 Wilkinson 1991, 84.
- 27 Houghton and Lorber 2002: Antiochos I: Gold staters: probably Ephesus/Miletos: no. 546; tetradrachms: Lysimachia: no. 481; Magnesia-on-the-Meander: no. 540; Carian Issue: no. 553; drachms: Magnesia-on-the-Meander: no. 554; Alinda or Mylasa: no. 551; Antiochos II: tetradrachms: perhaps Tralles: no. 536; perhaps Ephesus: no. 543; probably Ephesus/Miletos: no. 547; Alinda or Mylasa: no. 552.
- 28 However, there is occasionally slight drapery on the right thigh of Apollo, similar to the coins of subset A, at Magnesia-on-the-Meander: Newell and Mørkholm 1977, no. 1476 specimen B; and at Alinda or Mylasa: Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 551.
- 29 Welles 1934, 22: Βασιλεὺς Σέλευκος Μιλησίων τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ χαίρειν· / τῷ

προγόνων ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς πολλὰς καὶ μεγάλας /εὐεργεσίας κατατεθειμένων εἰς τὴν ὑμετέραμ πόλιν διὰ τε /τοὺς ἐγδεδομένους χρησμοὺς ἐκ τοῦ παρ' ὑμῖν ἱεροῦ /τοῦ Διδυμῆως Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ διὰ τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸν θεὸν /συγγένειαν, ἔτι δὲ καὶ διὰ τὴν τοῦ δήμου εὐχαριστίαν, /ὀρῶντες καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐκ τε τῶν ἄλλων τῶμ πεπολιτευμένων /ὑμῖν διὰ παντὸς τοῦ χρόνου πρὸς τὰ ἡμέτερα πράγματα, /παραθέντων ἡμῖν τῶμ πατριξῶ-μ> φίλων, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἀπολογισμοῦ /[ο]ῦ ἐποιήσαντο Γλαύκιππος καὶ Διόμανδρος οἱ παρ' ὑμῶν /[κ]εκομκότες τὸν ἱερὸν στέφανον τὸν ἐκ τοῦ ἀδύτου? /ἔστεφανώκει ἡμᾶς ὁ δῆμος, εἰλικρινῇ καὶ βεβαίᾳ ποιουμένους /ὑμᾶς πρὸς τοὺς φίλους ἀπόδειξιγ καὶ μνημνόμενους ὧν ἂν εὖ /πάθῃτε, ἀπεδεξάμεθα τὴν αἴρεσιν τοῦ πλήθους καὶ /προθυμούμενοι καὶ ἐν τοῖς μεγίστοις ἡγούμεν[οι τῇ πόλιν ὑμῶν] /εἰς ἐπιφανεστέραν διάθεσιν ἀγαγεῖν κ[αὶ τὰ ὑπάρξοντα ὑμῖν] /φιλάνθρωπα ἐπιδ[οσιν λαβόντα ἦν προαιρεῖσθε ἐπαῦξαι].

30 Welles 1934, 107.

31 See Coşkun 2015, 2016, 2018 for a new chronology of the war of the brothers that places Antiochos Hierax's revolt as part of the Third Syrian War.

32 A similar type which incorporated a bow rather than a tripod was utilised on gold staters at a mint associated with Antioch, at Susa, and at Ekbatana: Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 701, 703, 786, 809. It was used on silver drachms at Sardis, and on bronzes from Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris: Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 656, 781–4. Additionally, two standing Apollo may have been minted at Ephesus: Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 671. This second type features the diademed head of Seleukos II on the obverse and Apollo standing left holding an arrow and resting his hand on a grounded bow. This type had clear precedent in the standard Seleukid Apollo-on-the-omphalos type in which the god holds an arrow and rests his hand on a grounded bow while seated on the omphalos. The relationship of these two types is demonstrated by a type from Seleukos II's new mint at Nisibis: (Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 750). The reverse of this type shows Apollo standing left holding an arrow and resting his left hand on a grounded bow, with an extremely tall tripod behind him. This type demonstrates how closely linked the two types were iconographically and ideologically. This standing Apollo with a bow type was also modified by changes in the obverse image mostly in Asia Minor.

33 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 806–8.

34 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 675, 721, 741.

35 Susa produced a variant of the Apollo-on-the-omphalos type on three bronze denominations. Here the royal bust faced three-quarters right, Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 802–4, a variation that appears to have had more to do with local style rather than with a discernible policy. The three-quartered turned busts were a variation that was more common in the East, especially at Susa and Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris. It drew on Near Eastern portrait style rather than traditional Greek style. This portrait is particularly difficult to identify and may belong to a later King Seleukos given the Apollo-on-the-omphalos reverse.

36 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 921.

37 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 925.

38 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 942.

39 Houghton and Lorber 2002: Seleukeia-on-the-Calycadnus: no. 916; Unattributed in Kilikia or Northern Syria: no. 919. Another variant of this type, which featured the same obverse

and reverse images but in a different style, was also minted in Kilikia or Northern Syria. This type recalls a variety of pre-existing Seleukid images; most obviously the traditional Seleukid type of Apollo-on-the-omphalos. The traditional Seleukid image was here combined with the image of Seleukos II's coinage: the standing Apollo resting on the tripod. The bow held by Apollo is not an uncommon Seleukid image as it had appeared as a variation of the Apollo-on-the-omphalos type, but it also recalls the image of the 'Datames' coinage from Kilikia discussed in chapter two, as well as the seated Amazonian archer which was commonly featured on the coins of Soloi in Kilikia, as well as the coinage issued by Arsaces I of Parthia. See Erickson and Wright 2011 for this connection. This coinage therefore linked a long-standing Kilikian tradition to the Seleukid tradition. However, the dominant iconographic force appears to be Seleukid.

- 40 The traditional date for the death of Seleukos II comes from Porphyry/Eusebius as the second year of Olympiad 138 (-227/6 BC); cf. Grainger 1997, 61. The *Babylonian King List of the Hellenistic Period* also known as 'King List 6' (Obv. 14; Rev. 1) lists him as ruler until 225/4 when he was succeeded by Seleukos III. For 'King List 6' see Sachs and Wiseman 1954. For the accession of Seleukos III in late 225/early 224 see *BCHP* 10; Hoover 2007, 25.
- 41 This type featured Seleukos III on the obverse and the typical reverse of Seleukos II on the reverse: Apollo standing to the left testing an arrow and resting his elbow on a tall tripod: Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 936. The type has been attributed both to the reign of Seleukos II, Newell and Mørkholm 1977, 366–8, as well as to early in the reign of Seleukos III: Seyrig 1973, 20, no. 1.141. However, as the type was produced in at least three emissions it suggests that it was not an isolated mistake at the start of the reign of Seleukos III. This suggests that the mint simply paired a new obverse with a familiar type.
- 42 For Antiochos III's methods of re-creating a powerful Seleukid past in Asia Minor see: Ma 2000, 26–33; Schmitt 1964, 86. Cf. Livy 33.40, 34.58.4–6, 35.16.6; Polyb. 18.51; App. Syr. 3, 6.
- 43 The recurve bow appears on one type from Houghton and Lorber mint A, Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 1114, and on series 4 drachms from Ekbatana, Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 1235–6.
- 44 Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008, 4.
- 45 Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008, nos. 1313 (1, 4), 1314, 1326–30.
- 46 Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008, nos. 1313 (1, 2, 3, 6), 1331.
- 47 Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008, nos. 1316, 1353–6.
- 48 Hoover 2002; Iossif and Lorber 2007.
- 49 Grainger 1997, 63–5; Hoover 2002, 83–5. See Grainger 2017, 12–4 for the durability of treaties.
- 50 See de Callatay and Lorber 2011.
- 51 Newell 1941, 164; Waage 1952, 4.2:7; Cox 1966; Westermarck 1991; Le Rider 1999, 74–96; Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 225; Erickson 2018b.
- 52 See Erickson 2018b.
- 53 See Muccioli 2013, 120–1.
- 54 See de Callatay 2012 for the function of control or mint marks on Hellenistic coinage.
- 55 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 227.

- 56 The various later lists of priests for the ancestors of the living king invariably include Antiochos; e.g. *OGIS* 233 from Antioch in Persis; *OGIS* 246 from Teos; and *OGIS* 245 from Seleukeia-in-Pieria. No scholar appears to have suggested that there was not a posthumous cult of the Seleukid kings following the deification of Seleukos I. For Seleukid ruler cult in general see: Bevan 1901; Bikerman 1938; Chaniotis 2003, 436–7; Habicht 1970; Hazzard 2000; Ma 2000; van Nuffelen 1999, 2004; Erickson 2018a.
- 57 Admittedly we have no evidence that this temple served as a royal tomb along the Ptolemaic model, we do have evidence for priests for Antiochos Apollo Soter from the reign of Seleukos IV (*OGIS* 245).
- 58 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 322–3. Iossif 2011, 268–72 has rightly suggested that the origin of the Apollo type is Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris. In this case, the deified form of Seleukos that appears at the mint of Sardis was likely produced prior to Antiochos arrival in 276. The significance of the deification can also be seen in Philetairos’ production of Seleukos in a horned helmet before he transferred the body of Seleukos to Antiochos, Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 309.
- 59 Houghton and Lorber 2002, 225.
- 60 Fulińska 2010, 83; Hazzard 1995, 5.
- 61 Here I would suggest that rather than referencing the dynasty in its entirety the use of the caps of the Dioskouroi was limited as a marker to female members of the Ptolemaic royal house, see Clayman 2014, 129–30; Hazzard 1995, 5.
- 62 Hazzard 1995, 4–5. See Ager 2017 for the significance of the marriage and the development of symbolism connected to weddings.
- 63 Fulińska Fulinska 2010, 83–9 makes a convincing argument that the use of the term *Basilissa* reflects an Egyptian reflection of the importance of the role of wife of the Pharaoh.
- 64 See above for a discussion of the Third Syrian War and the causes of Ptolemy’s intervention.
- 65 The Dioskouroi are of course common in Asia Minor and it is always difficult to identify any particular set of deities with a particular queen (or king).
- 66 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 565–7. Under Antiochos I, bronze coinage also included symbols of the Dioskouroi at Tarsus but not their caps. Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 332–4.
- 67 Aldea Celada 2013.
- 68 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 313, 318.
- 69 Houghton and Lorber 2002, 116; Robertson 1975, 473–4.
- 70 Houghton and Lorber 2002, 123.
- 71 Newell and Mørkholm 1977, 275.
- 72 Herakles bears the epithet *Soter* on the second-century coinage of Thasos, Head 1911, 266, fig. 164. See Coşkun 2012 for the argument that Antiochos did not receive his title *Soter* for his involvement in the Galatian wars, but that it was a later creation.
- 73 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 497, 500–1, 503–5, 509–12, 516.
- 74 It is interesting to note that both Antiochos I and Antiochos II used the image of Herakles

to stress their power in Asia Minor rather than Apollo. Their use of Herakles in this context should further put to rest the idea that Seleukid connections to Apollo only grew out of Seleukid interests in Asia Minor, in particular Didyma and Miletus.

75 App. Syr. 65.

76 Houghton and Lorber 2002: perhaps Temnus: no. 597, Myrina: nos. 500–1; Cyme: nos. 503–5; Phocaea: nos. 509–12; perhaps Smyrna: no. 516.

77 Houghton and Lorber 2002, 168.

78 Ath. 10.438 c; *Aelian Var. Hist.* 2.41; Grainger 1997, 119.

79 Ath. 289f – 290.

80 For Demetrios' cult at Athens see for example: Thonemann 2005; Scott 1928; Holton 2014.

81 (Houghton and Lorber 2002, 168).

82 Athenaeus 7.438d = Phylarchos 6, *FHG* i, 335–6; for a brief look at the political role of Themison at the court see Ramsey 2011.

83 For drunkenness as a trope in Athenaeus see: Ceccarelli 2011.

84 Ath. 289f – 290 καὶ Θεμισῶν δὲ ὁ Κύπριος, τὰ Ἀντιόχου τοῦ βασιλέως παιδικὰ, ὥς φησι Πύθερμος ὁ Ἐφέσιος ἐν τῇ ὀγδόῃ τῶν ἱστοριῶν, οὐ μόνον ἐν ταῖς πανηγύρεσιν ἀνεκηρύττετο Θεμισῶν Μακεδῶν, Ἀντιόχου βασιλέως Ἡρακλῆς· ἔθουον δὲ καὶ αὐτῶ πάντες οἱ ἐγχώριοι ἐπιλέγοντες Ἡρακλεῖ Θεμισῶνι, καὶ παρῆν αὐτὸς ὁπότε τις τῶν ἐνδόξων θύοι καὶ ἀνέκειτο στρωμνὴν καθ' αὐτὸν ἔχων ἡμφιεσμένος λεοντήν.

85 For a discussion of these women see: Ogden 2009.

86 Hornblower and Spawforth 1996, 451; Scott 1928, 235–6.

87 Ath. 253a–253b. Λεινὴς μὲν καὶ Λαμίας Ἀφροδίτης ἱερὰ καὶ βουρίχου καὶ Ἀδεμάντου καὶ Ὀξυθέμειδος τῶν κολάκων αὐτοῦ καὶ βωμοὶ καὶ ἡρώα καὶ σπονδαί.

88 Ath. 253a οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι κολακείας πρὸς τὸν Πολιορκητὴν Δημήτριον.

89 Ath. 438c; *Aelian Var. Hist.* 2.41.

90 App. Syr. 65 δεῦτερος δὲ Ἀντίοχος ἕτερος, ἐκ τῶνδε τῶν γάμων γενόμενος, ὅτῳ θεὸς ἐπώνυμον ὑπὸ Μιλησίων γίγνεται πρῶτον, ὅτι αὐτοῖς Τίμαρχον τύραννον καθεῖλεν.

91 *OGIS* 245.

92 Babelon 1890, lxi; See MacDonald 1907, 158 for argument against Babelon.

93 MacDonald 1907, 158.

94 Houghton and Lorber 2002: Myrina: no. 498; Cyme: no. 502; probably Phocaea: no. 515.

95 Houghton and Lorber 2002, 168.

96 Houghton and Lorber 2002: Sardis: no. 517; Miletos: no. 548; Tarsus: no. 559.

97 MacDonald 1907, 158.

98 See Meadows 2001 for a discussion on the problems of linking civic coin production to autonomy.

99 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 709.

100 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 767–8.

101 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 173; cf. chapter one.

- 102 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 322; cf. chapter two.
- 103 See Erickson 2018a for lack of centralised recognition of the Seleukid kings as divine outside numismatic imagery.
- 104 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 710.
- 105 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 716.
- 106 For stars on coinage representing a metrological event see: Ramsey 1999.
- 107 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 785.
- 108 See above.
- 109 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 800–1.
- 110 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 820–1.
- 111 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 817–9.
- 112 See Lorber and Iossif 2009.
- 113 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 797–8.
- 114 See Kingsley 1981a, 1981b, 1984, 1991 for the idea that the *kausia* is not in origin Macedonian but first adopted by Alexander in the East, the cap then comes to signify the Macedonian army to the West. The reactions to the use of the cap in the East are unrecorded. See Fredricksmeyer 1986, 1994 for the counter argument. What is clear and important for our purposes here is that shortly after Alexander's campaign the cap was widely regarded as Macedonian.
- 115 Arrian 7.23.
- 116 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 759, 796.
- 117 Lorber and Iossif 2009.
- 118 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 813.
- 119 See chapter two for a discussion of the seated archer as a representation of the king.
- 120 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 799, 822–4.
- 121 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 1100, 1097, 1099, 1171–3, 1240–2, 1255–8.
- 122 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 1053, 1175, 1216–7.
- 123 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 976, 1136, 1170, 1272–7, 1288.
- 124 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 976a–82, 1191, 1086–8, 1227, 1293.
- 125 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 1085.
- 126 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 1065–8, 1135–6, 1170, 985–7.
- 127 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 1120.
- 128 Chrubasik 2016, 19.
- 129 See McAuley 2018; D'Agostini 2018 for the potential that Achaïos was in fact a Seleukid relative. See Chrubasik 2016 for a careful analysis of Seleukid usurpers.
- 130 See Coşkun 2015, 2018 for new arguments on the nature of Hierax's rebellion.
- 131 Coşkun 2018.

- 132 Sachs and Hunger 1989, II: 245.
- 133 Coşkun 2018, 211–4.
- 134 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 652–63.
- 135 Porphy. *FGrH* 260 F 43 ll. 11f.
- 136 Coşkun 2018, 231–4; Coşkun here dates the battle of Ankyra to September 246 and the Ptolemaic invasion of Antioch only to shortly after this event in October.
- 137 P.Gourob II-IV; *OGIS* 54; Polyainos 8.50. It is irrelevant to our discussion here whether or not, or even how many, officials came to Ptolemy in Antioch or the extent of his claims, but only that he in fact did control the city.
- 138 For the non-literary evidence see BCHP 11; *OGIS* 54. See BCHP 11 commentary for the date of Seleukos II's restoration of power in Babylon to 22.III.67 SEB = 11 July 245 BC.
- 139 The control of Kilikia was constantly in contention between the two major powers, but it seems that parts of Kilikia had unsuccessfully resisted attempts at Ptolemaic control: *FGrH* 160 = Austin² 266.
- 140 *FGrH* 260 F43: et Syriam quidem ipse obtinuit, Kilikiam autem amico suo Antiocho gubernandam tradidit, et Xanthippo alteri duci provincias trans Euphraten. The Xanthippus who was appointed to control Mesopotamia may have been the unnamed official of King Ptolemy discussed in BCHP 11 obv. 12, rev. 3, 6.
- 141 See Coşkun 2018 for the chronology.
- 142 Cf. *OGIS* I 229= Ihnken, I. Magnesia am Sipylus (=IK 8) = I.Smyrna II.1 (=IK 24.1) 573 = Austin² 174, 1ff. for Seleukos' crossing into the region.
- 143 Strabo *Geogr.* 16.2.14; for traditional arguments on the dating of this agreement see (Duyrat 2005, 227–33); for the purpose of this agreement see (Kosmin 2014, 122) (as an independent buffer between the Ptolemies and the Seleukids); Rigsby 1996, 11 for the conditions and the benefits to both parties. Grainger 1997, 61, 168 who dates the grant of freedom to Arados to c. 242.
- 144 See Coşkun 2018.
- 145 Coşkun does not account for the fact that even after Seleukos' alliance with Hierax and subsequent peace with Ptolemy the port city of the Seleukis, Seleukeia-in-Pieria, remained in Ptolemaic hands. Whether the Ptolemaic garrison which controlled the city remained loyal to Ptolemy after Hierax switched allegiances, or whether Hierax never controlled the city but only Antioch, is unknowable.
- 146 Just. 27.3; Coşkun 2018 contra Bevan 1902, 191–3; Bouché-Leclercq 1914, 2:107; Macurdy 1932, 86; Ihnken 1978, 32; Ogden 1999, 131; Boehringer 1993; Duyrat 2005, 232; Plischke 2014, 229.
- 147 Cf. Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 835–8, 840–6, 848–55, 857–72, 874–914.
- 148 The recurve bow is typically associated with Greek gods and Archaic heroes; although in the Classical period the bow of Herakles switches from recurve to compound. Furthermore, recurve bows are more typical of barbarian peoples in Attic art. The shift on Antiochos' coinage may simply reflect the more modern bow type. On the 'Datames' coinage issued in Kilikia the bow is recurve, as is the bow on early Parthian coinage. See chapter two.
- 149 See above for the winged-diadem coinage of Antiochos II.

- 150 Houghton and Lorber 2002: Antiochos I: nos. 875–6, 878, 880–3; young king: nos. 877, 879.
- 151 Houghton and Lorber 2002: Ilion: Antiochos I: nos. 871, 872; Lampsakos: young king: no. 850; perhaps Abydos: young king: no. 843.
- 152 Chrubasik 2016, 112.
- 153 McAuley 2018; D’Agostini 2018; Chrubasik 2016, 103.
- 154 Polyb. 4.48.6–10; Will 1962; D’Agostini 2018, 65.
- 155 Polyb. 5.57.5.
- 156 See Schmitt 1964, 171–3; Will 1962; Ma 2000, 57–9; Chrubasik 2016, 102–6; D’Agostini 2018, 63–4 for a wider analysis of Achaïos’ ascension. Given his earlier denial of the royal prerogative, there appear to have been material changes in his circumstances beyond his defeat of Attalos that spurred this decision. Chrubasik is likely correct that all of the rebellions under Antiochos III were connected to the precarious nature of the power relationships between the royal *philoï* inherited by Antiochos, including Hermeias, Achaïos, and Molon. See Mittag 2017 for the types of misconduct that appear to have been rife at Seleukos III’s court.
- 157 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 952–9.
- 158 It should be noted that the pairings and the representations were either new or rare within the empire. Thus they evoke some of the Seleukid imagery which may have been required for the acceptance of the fiduciary coinage, while still creating a new image for Achaïos. This new image stressed his connection to Zeus recalling the importance of Zeus to the first generation of the successors, but also hints at his Seleukid family connections.
- 159 Houghton and Lorber 2002, 348; Fleischer 1991, 40.
- 160 Polyb. 4.2.4–10.
- 161 Polyb. 5.41.1, 5.43.5–6, 5.55.1–10.
- 162 Polyb. 5.45.1–5.48.16.
- 163 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 343, 348; Chrubasik 2016, 106.
- 164 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 949, 951.
- 165 Houghton and Lorber 2002, no. 950.
- 166 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 173–6. The coinage also recalls the bronzes produced at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris under Seleukos II. So the image remained a potent one of Seleukid victory, which could be usurped by challengers.
- 167 Chrubasik 2016, 122.

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A new start?

Before the reign of Antiochos IV, Seleukid iconography developed in a clear pattern. As [chapter one](#) demonstrated, Seleukos I began by producing coinage in the model of Alexander's coinage before developing his own coinage that highlighted his own victories and his links to Zeus. Towards the end of his reign and during the reign of his son, Antiochos I, a new image was developed that highlighted the new family dynastic god, Apollo. This image of Seleukid kingship had resonances throughout the empire from traditional links to Apollo in Asia Minor to versions of the traditional king in Persia, as discussed in [chapter two](#). This image came to define Seleukid iconography as we saw in [chapter three](#), as every king from Seleukos II to Seleukos IV adopted images of the dynastic god. The interpretation of this imagery within the empire does not appear to have been solely the acceptance of an imposed royal image, but a negotiation of the dynamics of power reinterpreted within a local context.

As [chapter two](#) demonstrates even when there was a systematic attempt to propagandise the king's authority and his connection to the gods through imagery. The image, the king on the obverse and Apollo-on-the-omphalos, was interpretable in the same way but within a local context. The process of developing Seleukid authority required buy-in from local elites who gained benefactions as well as considerable autonomy, so long as they continued to acquiesce to Seleukid authority.

The recent analysis of Parthian and Seleukid relations¹ as well as a reassessment of the role of the Frataraka² demonstrate how this process could even include groups that have been considered themselves outside formal Seleukid sovereignty. As Ma demonstrated we can clearly see this model at work under Antiochos III in Asia Minor.³ An important aspect of this model of power depended on the appearance of the king or a representative of his authority to be present with some regularity to ensure that the negotiations took place for both sides. We are better informed about this process in Asia Minor, particularly for the reign of Antiochos III, but we can also see the emergence of this during the first successors, when men like the Milesian Demodamas served for the new kings but also worked to gain benefactions for

their home city.⁴ Furthermore, the iconography that was produced by agents of the Seleukids – royal mints, commissioned statues, etc. – allows us to reconstruct part of the propaganda that underlined the negotiation of Seleukid power. The propaganda required the recognition of the power of the king and his court. Following the reign of Antiochos I the Apollo-on-the-omphalos coinage appears to have served this purpose relatively well as it was adopted by each subsequent generation. The changes to this core Seleukid image that occurred during the reign of Antiochos IV provide a useful case study for demonstrating both the strength of this message but also the need for increased flexibility.

Regardless of when we date the start of the collapse of Seleukid power and with it the empire,⁵ the defeat of Antiochos III at Magnesia sent significant shock-waves throughout the empire that would have disrupted the existing conceptions of Seleukid authority. Antiochos III's own expeditions eastwards were at least partially to reaffirm his previous settlement of the Seleukid East and renegotiate the terms of support for the Seleukid house. Seleukos IV's supposed inactivity has been shown to hide considerable efforts at consolidation of support and power structures.⁶ Despite this, neither king made significant changes to the established pattern of Seleukid silver coinage first established by Antiochos I.⁷ Subtle hints at reform, subsidiary symbols on the tetradrachms increase in frequency and new bronze types are introduced at Antioch, begin during the reign of Seleukos IV but there is not a significant restructuring of the iconography of the Seleukid state. Perhaps one cause of this consistency was the need to continue to present Seleukid authority across the empire as unchanged. In contrast, as is well known, Antiochos IV diversified the silver coinage across the empire. Zahle saw this as a new direction within Seleukid propaganda.⁸ What I will suggest is rather that Antiochos IV and his court recognised the increasingly important regional differences presented by Koile Syria and Egypt and that the region required a different approach to spread the same message of Seleukid power. This chapter will look at how the imagery of the empire under Antiochos IV diverged between East and West and how both images were compatible with traditional Seleukid imagery. In particular, we will examine how Antiochos IV chose to represent the empire in a more regional manner, along the lines of Seleukos I.

Antiochos IV's coinage reforms are a pivotal moment in the history of Seleukid numismatics⁹ as he partially broke from the long-standing tradition of placing Apollo on the reverse of his silver coinage.¹⁰ Furthermore, he expanded the use of epithets on the coin legends as well as introduced a new radiate crown;¹¹ changed the monetary standards;¹² and granted municipal mints the right to produce coinage.¹³ This chapter will focus on the iconographic changes in order to examine how Antiochos reformed the

existing image of the Seleukid house in an attempt to revive its fortunes in the face of increasing Roman dominance.

Antiochos IV and his rise to power

The early attempts to explain the shift of coinage motifs from Apollo to Zeus tended to focus on the perceived view that Antiochos was personally obsessed with Zeus when he began to proclaim his divinity on his coinage.¹⁴ This view has its roots in the idea of Antiochos IV as the oppressor of traditional Judaism and the imposer of a cult of Zeus at the temple of Jerusalem. Thus early modern scholars followed the Jewish literary tradition that painted him as a religious fanatic particularly devoted to Zeus.¹⁵ To some extent this portrayal was also present in non-Jewish contemporary sources, Polybios recounts the story of how he was called Epimanes (mad) instead of Epiphanes (illustrious) by the citizens of Antioch.¹⁶ Combined with this description is an emphasis on his devotion to the gods: ‘But in the sacrifices he furnished to cities and in the honours he paid to the gods he far surpassed all his predecessors, as we can tell from the temple of Olympian Zeus at Athens and the statues round the altar at Delos’.¹⁷ The emphasis on Zeus was a real change from the previous policy of his family¹⁸ and looks back to the reign of Seleukos I and the establishment of the empire.¹⁹ Iossif and Lorber have turned this traditional association on its head and instead proposed that in his eastern coinage, the appearance of stars and celestial imagery suggests that Antiochos instead associated his divinity with a syncretised version of Apollo (as a solar deity).²⁰ The first section below explores how the persistence of the Apollo iconography in the eastern parts of the empire reinforces the suggestion that Apollo functioned as an acceptable Seleukid symbol within the important regions of Mesopotamia and Iran, and that for those regions Antiochos could be seen as part of a continuous tradition of Seleukid kings. The second section explores how Antiochos IV’s focus on the region of Koile Syria and his invasion of Egypt led to the redeployment of an older iconography for the representation of Seleukid power in the western empire. The final section examines Antiochos’ expression of his own divinity.

Before examining the coinage of Antiochos IV, it is worthwhile to briefly review the developments that led up to his seizure of power. The terms imposed by the Romans on his father after his defeat at Magnesia on the Sipylus in 190 BC²¹ were not just significant for Seleukid prestige, but also personally for Antiochos. As well as requiring the payment of a massive indemnity, the loss of territory and military capabilities, the peace terms

required that the future Antiochos IV be sent as a captive to Rome.²² Following his father's death in 187, Antiochos IV's older brother Seleukos IV took the throne and he remained captive at Rome until 178, when the Romans agreed to exchange him for his nephew, Demetrios.²³ In 175, while Antiochos IV was in Athens,²⁴ Seleukos IV was assassinated.²⁵ With the help of Eumenes II, Antiochos IV raised an army and marched into Seleukid Syria where he declared himself the guardian for another of Seleukos' sons, Antiochos, and married his brother's wife and queen Laodike. By marrying Laodike (possibly his sister), Antiochos IV integrated himself into the existing power structure.²⁶ Unsurprisingly, at the start of his reign Antiochos issued coinage of the traditional Seleukid type. At Antioch, the production of the Apollo-on-the-omphalos type continued until about 173/2, when a second series of tetradrachms was begun.²⁷ The obverse of this type featured the diademed portrait of Antiochos IV, with the diadem ends adorned with stars.²⁸ But his coinage also incorporated new imagery; the reverse type featured the reintroduction of Seleukos I's Zeus Nikephoros type (Figure 4.1). A second significant change was the legend. Rather than the normal *Basileus Antiochou*, the legend reads *Basileus Antiochou Theou Epiphanou*. While Seleukid kings had been recognised as divine by various cities from the beginning of the empire, the explicit statement of the king's divinity was rare on coinage. The change of legend was even rarer, with a single prior recorded type, the Antiochos Soter coinage.²⁹ Thus Antiochos' coinage represents a dramatic break in the self-representation of the Seleukid king as had been established since the reign of Antiochos I.



Figure 4.1 Silver tetradrachm, Antioch, Antiochos IV: Antiochos IV/Zeus Nikephoros. CNG online auction 412, Lot: 60. www.cngcoins.com

Antiochos IV and Apollo

Although there is considerable focus on Antiochos' relationship with Zeus, in part because of the reintroduction of Zeus onto Seleukid coinage, Zeus was only introduced at the two major mints in the western portion of Antiochos' empire. As Antioch was the most important mint in terms of production, this does include a large portion of Antiochos' silver production, but the eastern half of the empire continued to produce Apollo types. As the following section argues the introduction of Zeus was related to Antiochos' perception of himself in relation to the Seleukid past and his campaigns against Egypt. Furthermore, as this book has argued, Seleukid coinage was carefully crafted so that it could be interpreted within a regional framework as well as a dynastic framework. This is particularly true for the reintroduction of Zeus and the related coinage.³⁰ In examining the continuation of Apollo in the East, it seems important to demonstrate that the regional importance of interpretations of Apollo discussed in [chapter two](#) still apply. It is always more difficult to explain continuity than discontinuity. In order to enact a change, the king would have had to have had control over the region and have success in having the new image to be accepted there, as we see in the case with Seleukid usurpers.³¹ So one hypothetical reason why the Apollo imagery remained at the mints in Mesopotamia and Iran would be that Antiochos was not fully in control over the minting activities in those regions and there was a strong reluctance to deviate from previous imagery. This reluctance could have been the result of fears of non-acceptance of the new currency. The rejection of new types was not unknown in the Seleukid empire. For example during the reign of Seleukos II, Ekbatana did not adopt the standing Apollo of Seleukos II but maintained the traditional seated type.³² The production of this coinage did occur during a period of considerable turmoil in the empire, and perhaps Seleukos II's influence was not sufficient to force a change in the coinage, or perhaps Ekbatana simply never got the information to change types.³³ However, there is in fact no evidence that the city asserted any form of independence from Seleukos during this period and it may have had particular local interpretations of the image, that are unknown to us, that made its persistence particularly important.

This example notwithstanding, the occurrences of major changes in form not being adopted at the majority of mints were relatively rare and often occurred only at a single mint rather than at several, suggesting they were driven by local rather than regional or supra-regional significance. It is clear that the Seleukids did not require absolute consistency on their coinage from all of their mints, but certain degrees of local autonomy were permitted, not

only in subsidiary marks, but occasionally major additions such as the winged diadems added to Hierax's coinage in the Troad³⁴ (Figure 4.2).



Figure 4.2 Silver tetradrachm, Alexandria Troas, Antiochos Hierax: Antiochos I with winged diadem/Apollo-on-the-omphalos. CNG coin shop, 974192. www.cngcoins.com

So, could Mesopotamia and Iran's retention of the Apollo form be seen as a sign of resistance to Antiochos' rule? This seems unlikely owing to Antiochos' activities in the eastern part of the empire and also on iconographic grounds. Antiochos IV was present and active in the East and in Babylon where he may have refounded the city as a Greek polis.³⁵ Furthermore, as Iossif and Lorber have shown, the celestial imagery that began to appear on Antiochos' coinage is not limited only to the West, but in fact originates in the East.³⁶ Even more importantly, there would have been some resistance to any potential attempt to transform Seleukid iconography and hence the appearance of money in the region. However, by carefully examining Antiochos' actions across the empire, this section suggests that Apollo played a significant role in his propaganda in the eastern half of the kingdom.



In order to test this hypothesis, I will now turn to the festival that Antiochos IV held at Daphne in 166 before he embarked on his eastern campaign.³⁷ I will focus solely on the aspects of this festival that are linked to Apollo, and to the sanctuary at which it was celebrated. The importance of the sanctuary of Apollo at Daphne to the Seleukids has been discussed in light of the manipulation of the Antioch foundation story by the Antiochenes in the second century AD,³⁸ but it was clearly an important sanctuary, as Antiochos III appointed priests of the cult of Apollo and Artemis in 189.³⁹ The purpose of Antiochos IV's festival has been viewed variously as a reaction against the Roman humiliation in Egypt and a show of force, as a reaction against Paullus' triumph in Amphipolis, or as an imitation of a Roman triumph, or least convincingly as an effort to associate it with his first ten years of rule.⁴⁰ Regardless of its purpose in a larger strategic context, the festival served as a show of significant military strength and of Seleukid wealth.⁴¹ It also seems sensible to connect this festival and its arrayed military to Antiochos' campaign to reconfirm Seleukid authority in the eastern empire, as this project appears to have begun shortly after the festival. As I have noted was done before he invaded Egypt,⁴² Antiochos also produced a special edition coinage for the festival. This time, rather than drawing on an Egyptian model with Zeus, it, perhaps unsurprisingly, featured the laureate head of Apollo on the obverse and Apollo carrying a cithara on the reverse (Figure 4.3).⁴³ Lacroix argued in 1949 that the reverse image represents the cult statue of Apollo in Daphne, and there has been no suggestion that this was not in fact the case.⁴⁴ In analysing the festival and Antiochos' motives, the strong connection between the festival and royal imagery has been readily noted,⁴⁵ but the wider implications of a festival, special coinage issue, and the particular choice of god before a large military campaign was undertaken have not.

While the sacrifice and consultation of the relevant gods was a normal practice, the issuing of special coinage is more unique. I do not think that one needs to propose a special connection between Antiochos IV and Apollo, although it is clear that Antiochos appears particularly interested in solar deities (which may now include Apollo, in addition to Mesopotamian, Iranian, and Syrian sky gods).⁴⁶ This interest in solar deities was clearly represented in the festival as we can see in Polybios' account of the procession as preserved in Athenaios. At the end of the long list of participants we have an image of the cosmos: 'Behind them came images of Night and Day, of Earth and Heaven, and of Dawn and Midday'.⁴⁷ I think it is unnecessary to connect this explicitly to Apollo, although it is certainly feasible, and as Iossif argues that the general

tenor of the participation of the gods and the cosmos links the order of the universe with support for the Seleukid house.⁴⁸ The most important connection which must have been clear to all present was the connection between Antiochos and the sun.⁴⁹ One should not forget the importance that Antiochos IV appears to have placed on dedications to the wide variety of gods, not exclusively Zeus or Apollo, throughout his empire and the broader Greek world. We can see this both in the procession: 'For representations of all the gods and spirits mentioned or worshipped by men and of all the heroes were carried along, some gilded and others draped in garments embroidered with gold, and they were all accompanied by representations executed in precious materials of the myths relating to them as traditionally narrated'.⁵⁰ And through Antiochos' other dedications, including those at Delos and at Athens, which both Polybios and Livy record.⁵¹ Given their generally negative view of Antiochos,⁵² perhaps even more emphasis should be given to his generosity.

I would suggest that for Antiochos IV it was not a particular god that was important, but the conception of divine support and his promotion of his own divinity.⁵³ Furthermore, it is clear that Antiochos sought to make an impact with his dedications: the large pan-Hellenic festival at Daphne serves as one example, his support for the construction of the Peisistratid temple of Olympian Zeus in Athens marks another large-scale impact.⁵⁴ This emphasis generally on divinity also manifests itself through the increase in the variety of non-Greek gods who appear on his coinage, such as the Ba'al of Bylos.⁵⁵ If this is the case, how should we consider Antiochos' coin iconography? Here, I think the festival at Daphne becomes telling. Before embarking on his own eastern anabasis, he used the opportunity to promote his own association (and likely that of his dynasty as a whole) with Apollo. In doing so, I believe he acted as a normal Seleukid king in using iconography to propagandise the image of the Seleukid house. What makes Antiochos IV unique is that he had already broken from the traditional pattern of Seleukid coinage and returned to the iconography of Zeus. I would suggest, that in fact Antiochos' imagery was a conscious split in the iconography of the empire, where different gods represented the family's power in different contexts. Therefore, in terms of iconography he looked to imagery that was relevant to his family's history and to the regions in which he was going to be active. I would suggest that for Seleukid Mesopotamia and Seleukid Iran this meant Apollo. While it is impossible to fully prove, I would speculate that the reason that the tetradrachm types at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris,⁵⁶ Antioch-in-Persis,⁵⁷ Susa,⁵⁸ Ekbātana,⁵⁹ and two uncertain eastern mints⁶⁰ did not change was that there was no directive for them to change (Figure 4.4).



Figure 4.4 Silver tetradrachm, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, Antiochos IV: Antiochos IV/Apollo-on-the-omphalos. CNG online auction 60, Lot: 543. www.cngcoins.com

Further, I would suggest that the diversity of types under Antiochos was an example of what Ramsey has called ‘informal empire at work, with its utilization of resilient, decentralised, and socially embedded governmental systems suited to borrowing and perpetuation’.⁶¹ Before his reign, Seleukid coinage had chosen an image that could be interpreted within local contexts while maintaining empire-wide themes. However, perhaps owing to a change in the relative power of the negotiating parties (that is to say a weaker central Seleukid state), a stronger regional focus was adopted. The idea of a central image of Seleukid power was not abandoned but continued through the image of the king alone.

Antiochos and Zeus

The importance of the Jewish tradition on the interpretation of Antiochos IV’s coinage and hence our understanding of Seleukid royal ideology cannot be underestimated. Deriving from this tradition, Antiochos IV is strongly associated with Zeus, although Mørkholm has shown that he did not identify himself personally with Zeus.⁶² Some of the discussion, notably from Seyrig, has shown that Antiochos’ coinage did redeploy the imagery used by Seleukos I on silver.⁶³ It is fairly clear from his other actions such as the support of the construction of the temple of Zeus Olympios in Athens (which had begun under the Pisistratids and was only completed by the emperor Hadrian), and his construction of a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus in Antioch, that Antiochos was more active in the construction of temples for Zeus than his

predecessors.⁶⁴ As Mittag has pointed out this does not necessarily mean that Antiochos was solely devoted to Zeus, as a religious zealot for the god as some early twentieth-century authors suggested.⁶⁵

As a result of the scholarly rejection of Antiochos IV as having solely a personal connection with Zeus, the discussion of this iconographical development at the western mints which began to produce Zeus Nikephoros coinage has often viewed the changes as the result of an increased need for syncretisable deities in his kingdom or discussions of increased local independence.⁶⁶ While these views have much to recommend them, they are not the entire story.⁶⁷ First, although the Zeus Nikephoros coinage becomes a marker of identity in the familial conflict that follows Antiochos IV's death, during Antiochos' reign it appears to be used in a manner closer to the individual regional coinages discussed in the previous chapter. The most significant difference is that the major mint of Antioch begins to produce it as its main tetradrachm type creating a break in the tradition. Furthermore, we need to look at the coinage as part of a continuous Seleukid tradition starting with Seleukos I, rather than only placing the coinage in the context of post-Antiochos I coinage.

One of the important changes begun under Antiochos III and continued under Seleukos IV was the reduction of the total number of Seleukid mints and the growing importance of Antioch as the main mint for the western empire. Antiochos III used upwards of 30 separate mints and many seem to be tied to his campaigns. In contrast during the reign of Antiochos IV only a few mints produced silver coinage, with Antioch and Ptolemais producing the bulk of the coinage for the entire empire.⁶⁸ These two mints are also the only mints that produced the Zeus tetradrachm types. All other mints, including Ekbatana and Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, continued the Apollo-on-the-omphalos reverse type⁶⁹ (Figure 4.4). The combination of Antiochos' control of the East (discussed in the previous section) and the adoption of certain aspects of Antiochos' new iconographic programme strongly suggests that the reintroduction of the Zeus coinage was not designed to be adopted wholesale across the empire but rather that it was aimed specifically at the areas where it first appeared and circulated: that is the relatively newly conquered territory of Koile Syria and, perhaps Egypt as well. If we accept that Koile Syria was the main audience for the new coinage type, then we need to look at that region and its surroundings to determine the possible motivations behind the switch.

Antiochos IV, Koile Syria and Egypt

A major point of contention between the Seleukid and Ptolemaic empires had been control over the territory of Koile Syria. From the battle of Ipsos (301) until the reign of Antiochos III (198) the territory had been under Ptolemaic control but claimed by the Seleukid house. The situation reversed when Antiochos III finally conquered the territory. While the Lagids never fully accepted this loss, they made no attempt to regain it while Ptolemy V remained married to Cleopatra, daughter of Antiochos III, nor while she lived. However, this queen, Cleopatra Syra, died in 178/770 shortly before Antiochos IV engineered his succession to the diadem.⁷¹ With Cleopatra Syra no longer in power it became more likely that the Ptolemies would attempt to retake Koile Syria, which they claimed as their ancestral territory. This chapter will attempt to show that Antiochos had his own designs on control in Egypt,⁷² but first it is necessary to explore the traditional narrative of events before examining the complicated state of affairs at the start of the war.

According to the generally accepted narrative, the Ptolemaic court began the hostilities by invading in 170/169 under the auspices of the boy king Ptolemy VI.⁷³ In response to this Ptolemaic aggression, Antiochos sent several of his ministers in order to register a complaint in Rome.⁷⁴ However instead of waiting for a response from the Roman Senate, Antiochos took his own force and defeated the Ptolemaic army (in Ptolemaic territory), occupied the important fortress at Pelusium, and then conquered most of Egypt from his headquarters in Memphis. The Ptolemaic house, as was to become increasingly normal, was divided against itself, a state of affairs that Antiochos was able to exploit to his advantage while stationed in Memphis. After a series of negotiations, Ptolemy VI, who had begun to fall out of favour in Alexandria, joined his uncle in Memphis.⁷⁵ In response, the Alexandrians then proclaimed Ptolemy VIII (the younger brother of Ptolemy VI) king.⁷⁶ The question of whether or not Antiochos had himself declared Pharaoh or King in Egypt during this campaign should now be settled firmly in the negative.⁷⁷ However even without the title of Pharaoh, with his young nephew, the king Ptolemy VI, residing with him in Memphis, Antiochos was in the position to dictate much of Ptolemaic policy and control the country. On behalf of Ptolemy VI, Antiochos then besieged Alexandria but was unable to conquer the city.⁷⁸ He returned to Syria in the autumn of 169 leaving Ptolemy VI in control of Egypt on his behalf. This campaign was Antiochos' greatest success, and, according to the generally accepted narrative, from autumn 169 until the following year, Antiochos introduced a series of unique bronze coins of large size featuring Sarapis or Isis and the eagle of Zeus, as well as a series of silver fractions which highlighted the importance of Zeus, a goddess normally identified as Athena, and Apollo. The largest of these fractions, drachms, features the head of Antiochos with a diadem adorned with stars on the obverse and the same

eagle reverse. The other reverse types are an aegis with a gorgoneion in the centre and the final is a tripod. As we have seen there is a long Seleukid tradition of linking military victories with specific coinage, from the Susa victory coinage of Seleukos I to the victory coinages of Seleukos II. Therefore, this coinage could fit within a clear Seleukid tradition. However, there is the equally important tradition of producing military types that appear to be connected with Seleukid campaigns.⁷⁹

Returning to the narrative, Antiochos' success at controlling Egyptian policy was not to last, his two Ptolemaic nephews came to an understanding in 169/8, and in order to maintain his hard-won control Antiochos invaded Egypt for a second time. This time Antiochos could not use the excuse that he was simply coming to the aid of his nephew and he was likely crowned Pharaoh himself.⁸⁰ While advancing towards Alexandria, he was met by a delegation led by the Roman C. Popilius Laenas.⁸¹ At this famous meeting at Eleusis, Antiochos was forced to withdraw from Egypt without a fight in order to maintain his friendship with Rome. While most historians now follow Diodoros and look at this as a major defeat for the Seleukid king, Antiochos returned to Syria and presented his time in Egypt as a victory, much like Napoleon two millennia later.⁸² A new legend appeared on Antiochos' coinage in Antioch. The legend now read *Basileus Antiochou Theou Epiphanou Nicephorou*. At the same time a special tetradrachm issue was produced which featured the laureate head of Zeus on the obverse rather than the king, the reverse showed Zeus Nikephoros (Figure 4.5). After the special issue, the normal Zeus Nikephoros type was resumed. This time rather than Nike offering the crown to Zeus, Nike crowns the legend which includes Antiochos' name, reinforcing the connection between the victory and Antiochos.



Figure 4.5 Silver tetradrachm, Antioch, Antiochos IV: Antiochos IV/Zeus Nikephoros. Yale University Art Gallery. 2001.87.12063

From this narrative we can establish an important fact that has defined our

understanding of Antiochos' coinage; he produced the coinage to commemorate his campaigns rather than producing it before or during them. This narrative relies on a fixed chronology for a range of coinage produced in a relatively limited time period. By re-examining the iconography it may be possible to reassess the conflict to which each coinage is related and to take differing views on Antiochos' intentions. It is evident that after his second return to Antioch from Egypt Antiochos promoted his victories through coinage that highlighted his personal connection to Zeus, in the same manner that Seleukos I claimed his success from Zeus (Figure 4.6).

What I wish to propose is that we should see the first introduction of Zeus onto Antiochos' coinage before his first invasion of Egypt in a similar light. It appears that the promotion of Zeus goes hand in hand with Antiochos' campaigns in Egypt, not only because of his personal connection to the god but because it recalls the coinage of founders of the empire to which he now laid claim: Alexander, Ptolemy I, and Seleukos I.⁸³ Not only would this imagery have allowed Antiochos to tap into the prestige of his predecessors, but also may have reminded his audience of Seleukos' legitimate claims to Koile Syria and thus legitimatised Seleukid control in the face of Ptolemaic threats. The crucial question then remains, when did Antiochos introduce his Zeus coinage, was it a reaction to his success in Egypt or a precursor? To assess this question we need to return to Antiochos IV's actions before 170.



Figure 4.6 Silver tetradrachm, Ptolemaïs (Ake), Antiochos IV: Antiochos IV/Zeus *Nikephoros*. Yale University Art Gallery. 2016.94.1

In regards to the first invasion of Egypt, there are two opposing traditions regarding the instigation of the war. One in which Antiochos responds to Ptolemaic aggression, and one in which he is the aggressor. The two traditions can be roughly broken into two groups: the Graeco-Roman sources and the

sources which stem from a Jewish tradition. The Graeco-Roman sources include Polybios, Diodoros, and Livy all of whom place the blame on the Ptolemaic court. This view is followed by most modern scholars.⁸⁴ The Jewish tradition consists of the first book of Maccabees and Josephus. Interestingly Justin also follows this tradition.⁸⁵ Jewish authors are, for the most part, entirely hostile towards Antiochos. For this reason, they are often dismissed as prejudiced and the Graeco-Roman tradition is preferred.⁸⁶ While an anti-Antiochos bias may lie behind the attribution of aggression, no one denies that Antiochos' army was prepared to engage the Ptolemies, something clearly unexpected by the Egyptian rulers. With the Treaty of Apamea, the Romans had limited the numbers and the types of troops permitted to the Seleukids and the Ptolemaic court appears to have relied on an assumption of continued weakness. However, it is clear from the result of the campaign that Antiochos IV and his predecessor had been active in building their forces despite the restrictions imposed by the Romans and Antiochos was ready to respond to an Egyptian threat quickly and totally. This Egyptian complacent ignorance of the Seleukid military capacity is surprising given the events of the prior two decades. Following the death of Antiochos III, Seleukos IV became king and following a period of consolidation even he appeared to consider a more aggressive foreign policy, with an aborted invasion of Asia Minor,⁸⁷ an action that should have been known to the Ptolemaic court. Thus, on one level, it would be surprising if the Egyptian court expected to find Antiochos unprepared and expect Egypt to win a swift victory. If we are to approach the narrative from the other perspective, then we must ask what are the reasons that Antiochos began his military campaigns with an invasion of Egypt?

One reason for Antiochos' desire to lead a successful campaign may have been his perception that kingship required military success.⁸⁸ The Seleukids from their centres in Mesopotamia and Syria tended to have three directions for expansion, towards Asia Minor, towards Egypt, and towards the East. Perhaps mindful of his brother's refusal to violate terms of the Treaty of Apamea and Roman interests in Asia Minor, Antiochos must have considered the traditional area of Seleukid (re)conquest in Asia Minor as unavailable; he may have harboured thoughts of expanding against the dynasty's age-old enemy to the south rather than against the more problematic East. This would have followed the same pattern as the campaigns of his illustrious father. If we are willing to accept the possibility that Antiochos IV would have considered a campaign against Egypt as an option, then it is necessary to examine all of his Zeus coinage to understand this shift.



Figure 4.7 Bronze, Antioch, Antiochos IV: Zeus or Sarapis/Eagle. Yale University Art Gallery. 2001.87.10073

Traditionally, only two sets of coinage are connected with Antiochos' Egyptian campaigns. The first is the series of bronze coinage and silver fractions produced in c. 169: Silver: head of Antiochos with a diadem adorned with stars on the obverse and the eagle of Zeus on the reverse, Athena/aegis with gorgoneion, and Apollo/tripod; Bronze: Sarapis or Isis/eagle of Zeus (*Figure 4.7*). The second is the Zeus Nikephoros coinage with the expanded legend (*Figure 4.5*) produced after the second campaign. Antiochos also produced another series of coinage associated with Zeus that has not been connected with his Egyptian campaigns, that is the first introduction of the Zeus Nikephoros coinage begun in 173/2. It may be worth exploring if a connection to Antiochos' intentions on Egyptian control lay behind all of his Zeus coinage.

Let us begin with the bronze coinage with Egyptian imagery. The first question is whether or not this material fits within the same pattern and when they were produced. These coins are normally dated to after Antiochos' first invasion, so 169,⁸⁹ but Mørkholm proposed an earlier dating for the coins.⁹⁰ Traditionally, these coins are seen as the continued attempt by the Seleukid state to accommodate the reluctance of the major trading cities that had fallen under their control in 198 to adopt the Seleukid weight standard and their desire to maintain the traditional Ptolemaic one.⁹¹ However, Anokhin argues that we should view this coinage as Antiochos' propaganda to justify his invasion and celebrate his success alongside displaying his new connection with Zeus to further establish a link between himself and the Egyptian house.⁹²

The location of the coin production, together with the imagery itself, strongly suggests that Antiochos' new connection to Zeus (established by the introduction of the Nikephoros coinage in 173/2) in the West was heavily

emphasised in this coinage. Through an exploration of the iconography and ideology of the Seleukid court, it may be possible to further refine and expand Anokhin's thesis. As we saw in [chapter two](#), Antiochos claimed to have the support of the same gods that were popular under the founder of the dynasty, Seleukos I: Zeus through his eagle, Athena through the aegis and gorgoneion, and Apollo through the tripod. The choice of the eagle as an attribute of Zeus was not without a wide range of implications particularly for those familiar with Ptolemaic coinage. While the eagle was the traditional bird of Zeus and commonly associated with him in iconography, the Ptolemaic royal house had used the image of an eagle clutching a thunderbolt as a reverse type since the reign of Ptolemy I, where it may have been used to demonstrate a strong connection between Ptolemy's birth and the house of Alexander.⁹³ The most significant Egyptian element of the coinage was the appearance of Isis and Sarapis, both of whom were heavily utilised in Ptolemaic presentation.⁹⁴ Thus, under the traditional dating, Antiochos IV appears to have celebrated his first set of victories over the Ptolemaic empire with a series of coins that emphasised the support of the Egyptian gods that were particularly important to the Ptolemaic house, as well as the gods of the founder of the Seleukid house, Zeus, Athena, and Apollo. This coinage is clearly connected to both Antiochos' presentation of himself in the tradition of drawing legitimacy from Zeus as well as to his Egyptian campaign. Thus, it is fairly clear that links to Zeus run through all of Antiochos' Egyptian campaign coinage.

The second question of when this coinage was produced is more difficult. Here, I believe that Anokhin's highlighting of the Ptolemaic symbolism of this coinage and its possible connections to Antiochos IV himself is important.⁹⁵ Normally, Antiochos IV is viewed only as placing himself as regent for his Ptolemaic nephews subsequent to his invasion. If the bronze coinage can be dated to prior to 170, then the relationship between Antiochos and the boys may be more significant. Within the Seleukid kingdom, Antiochos had shown himself willing to exploit familial connections when they suited him to claim the diadem. In taking the kingdom, he excluded his older nephew Demetrios from the kingdom, married his brother's wife, and claimed the regency for his immature nephew, who when it proved necessary was removed. All accept that Antiochos had a legitimate claim to the Seleukid house, then what about the Ptolemaic house? The marriage of Cleopatra Syra to Ptolemy V could be viewed as a merger of the Seleukid and Ptolemaic royal houses, as the children born would have a claim to both Seleukid heritage as well as Ptolemaic. With both Cleopatra and Ptolemy V dead by 176, could Antiochos not already claim regency over the Ptolemaic princes before his invasion? While Antiochos does not seem to have explicitly done so before the invasion, as Anokhin rightly points out this mixing of the two houses is the clearest message that emerges

from the mixed lineage portrayed on the coinage.⁹⁶ In this case, through the introduction of a coinage that would have been particularly suitable for old Ptolemaic possessions under Seleukid control, as well as a rationalisation of bronze coinage in Antioch, Antiochos would have used coinage as propaganda to begin to lay the groundwork for his legitimate right to intervene in Ptolemaic affairs.

For this proposal to be plausible, it is necessary that Seleukid coinage does not only react to events but looks forward to potential campaigns of the kings. Furthermore, if Zeus is connected for the most part with campaigns towards Egypt and the Ptolemaic house, then I believe we should expect a different god to be highlighted on campaigns elsewhere in the empire.

Conclusion

If we follow the model of the Daphne coinage and its connection to Antiochos IV's eastern campaign, then it may be possible to do the same for the Zeus Nikephoros coinage. Therefore, if this interpretation of the Zeus coinage is correct, before both of Antiochos' major campaigns he would have produced series of coinage that were directly relevant to those campaigns and we can propose a new model of what Seleukid propaganda looked like before Antiochos' invasion of Egypt. After establishing his power in Antioch and removing the threats to his power from within his family, Antiochos began to look to expand his prestige through military expansion. His first target was the Ptolemaic kingdom to the south. To mark the beginning of preparations for this possible campaign, among other reasons, Antiochos introduced the first phase of his Zeus coinage. This coinage not only looked towards Egypt, but backwards towards the foundation of the Seleukid kingdom and to Alexander. As it became clear that the Ptolemaic house was also preparing for this conflict, Antiochos shifted his message to include his claims to a familial connection with the Ptolemaic house. This stage of the message explicitly mixed the Seleukid patrimonial message of the first Zeus coinage with an expanded emphasis on the Egyptian royal house. Finally, after the defeat of his plans to control Egypt, Antiochos was forced to return to his first message, but expanded with a new legend that promoted his success (however ephemeral). As his focus began to shift eastwards, Antiochos was able to shift his message once again, now focusing on the most important Seleukid god in the East.

Thus, rather than a concerted effort to promote Zeus throughout his kingdom, Antiochos appears to have chosen to promote the most relevant

deities connected with the Seleukid house for the areas in which he was most concerned. His primary aim was the strengthening of his own power and using his family, broadly defined, to secure and expand his power. In some areas, he maintained the traditional Seleukid link to Apollo. In others, mostly the recently conquered parts of Syria and his base in Antioch, he promoted the chief sky god, Zeus. Perhaps the cause of this shift lay in the past, as the king looked to re-expand his possessions after a series of setbacks he may have found inspiration in his own ancestor who had once lost everything and fled like a refugee to Egypt before returning to establish the new dynasty. Perhaps in this inspiration, Antiochos saw a devotion to Zeus as an important factor in his success, while simultaneously providing an opportunity to expand his rule by controlling his Ptolemaic nephews. An awareness of his whole heritage and potential claims also allowed him to recognise the importance of the traditional family god. The shrewd opportunism that Antiochos showed elsewhere in his reign may have led him to realise how to most effectively advertise the support of both gods in order for him to promote himself. Through all of this political manoeuvring, it is possible that Antiochos saw himself as a king who could draw on his familial connections to forge a new kingdom that included both the Seleukid lands and control of Egypt.

Notes

- 1 Gariboldi 2004; Jakobsson 2011; Strootman 2018; Wenghofer 2018.
- 2 Wiesehöfer 2007, 2011; Engels 2011, 2013, 2018.
- 3 Ma 2000.
- 4 Demodamas is discussed in chapter two. See Robert 1984.
- 5 Wolski 1990; Engels 2011.
- 6 Paltiel 1979.
- 7 As discussed in chapter three.
- 8 Zahle 1990.
- 9 Mørkholm 1963, 1966; Iossif 2011.
- 10 Wright 2007, 2009, 2012.
- 11 Iossif and Lorber 2009b.
- 12 Le Rider 1995.
- 13 Meadows 2001.
- 14 Bickermann 1937, 36–48, 92–6 rejected by Mørkholm 1966, 13–131. For a summary see: Rigsby 1980.

- 15 See Nicklas 2002 for views of Antiochos IV in the Maccabean tradition and Clifford 1975 for the tradition in Daniel. For a re-evaluation of the Maccabean revolt as fundamentally tied to taxation see: Honigman 2014; Zollschan 2015.
- 16 Athen. 10.439A = Polyb. 26.1.
- 17 Polyb. 26.1.10–11. See also Livy 41.20.
- 18 See Rigsby 1980 particularly for the emphasis on the continued importance of Zeus to the Seleukids in Seleukeia.
- 19 See chapter one.
- 20 Iossif and Lorber 2009a.
- 21 Polyb. 21.17–38; Livy 37.45; Diod. 29.10; Appian Syr. 38.
- 22 Livy 38.37; Polyb. 21.41; Appian Syr. 39.
- 23 Appian; Syr. 45; Paltiel 1979.
- 24 Mittag 2006, 41; Iossif and Lorber 2007.
- 25 App. Syr. 45.
- 26 Bunge 1974b; Mittag 2006, 42–8.
- 27 Mittag 2006, 118–27.
- 28 Iossif and Lorber 2009a.
- 29 Le Rider 1999, 74–96 and chapter three.
- 30 Erickson 2014.
- 31 Chrubasik 2016.
- 32 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 806–8.
- 33 See Coşkun 2015, 2018 for an analysis of the War of the Brothers which places Seleukos in a stronger position.
- 34 See chapter three; Boehringer 1993.
- 35 Mittag 2006, 182–208.
- 36 Iossif and Lorber 2009a.
- 37 Livy 33.48.4–6 and 33.49.6; cf. Ath. 12.540a; *OGIS* 248 l. 52–3; Diod. 31.16.1; Tac. *Hist.* 5.8.4–5.
- 38 Grigolin 2018.
- 39 Welles 1934, no. 44.
- 40 Mørkholm 1966, 97–8; Briscoe 1969, 51; Bunge 1974a, 1976, 53–71; Günther 1989; Morgan 1990, 47; Raup-Johnson 1993; Carter 2001; Mittag 2006, 282–95; Iossif 2010; Erskine 2013. See Gera and Horowitz 1997 for the discussion of the *pompe* in the Babylonian Astronomical Diaries not being the *pompe* at Daphne.
- 41 Houle 2015, 46–53.
- 42 Erickson 2014.
- 43 Le Rider 1999, 228 suggests a temporary mint at Daphne.
- 44 Lacroix 1949, 174.

- 45 Iossif 2010.
- 46 Iossif and Lorber 2009a.
- 47 Polyb. 30.25–27; Iossif 2010, 144.
- 48 Iossif 2010, 144.
- 49 Bunge 1975; Iossif and Lorber 2009b; Iossif 2010, 145–7.
- 50 Polyb. 30.25–27; Iossif 2010, 144.
- 51 Polyb. 26.1.10–11; Livy 41.5.
- 52 See for example discussions in Briscoe 1968; Morgan 1990; Mercer 2001; Scolnic 2014a, 2012.
- 53 See also Iossif 2010, 144.
- 54 Polyb. 26.1.10–11; Livy 41.5.
- 55 Cf. Wright 2007, 2009, 2012, 33–7.
- 56 Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008, nos. 1334–5.
- 57 Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008, nos. 1340–2.
- 58 Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008, nos. 1344–5.
- 59 Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008, no. 1352.
- 60 Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008, nos. 1360–4.
- 61 Ramsey 2019.
- 62 Bickermann 1937, 36–48, 92–6; Bickerman 1938, 232–3; Seyrig 1939; Newell 1978; Clifford 1975; Rigsby 1980; Nicklas 2002; Scolnic 2014b.
- 63 Seyrig 1939.
- 64 Livy 41.5. Although we should note that the Seleukids continued to patronise and construct temples for Zeus throughout the entirety of the dynasty, see Seyrig 1939; Rigsby 1980; Wright 2012.
- 65 Mittag 2006, 256–68, 279–8.
- 66 See Zahle 1990; Wright 2009 for analysis of various syncretisms in the later Seleukid coinage of Syria. See Hoover 2004 for the important discussion of political autonomy and coinage.
- 67 See, for example, the important analysis of the celestial imagery by Iossif and Lorber 2009a.
- 68 Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008, 44.
- 69 Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008, 44.
- 70 Bennett 2011.
- 71 Mittag 2006, 42–8.
- 72 See also Erickson 2014 for the argument that the introduction of the Zeus coinage is intimately tied to the Egyptian campaign.
- 73 See Grainger 2010, 291–308; Mittag 2006, 151–81 for two differing analyses of the causes and progression of the Sixth Syrian War.
- 74 Pol. 27.19, 28.1; Diod. Sic. 30.15–16; Livy 42.29.7; Mittag 2006, 159 all view the Ptolemies as aggressors while Macc. 1.1.16; Jos. *Ant. Jud.* 12.242; Justin 34.2.7 present Antiochos as

- aggressor in a tradition generally regarded as hostile to Antiochos.
- 75 Porphyr. *FGrH* 260 F 49a-b; cf. Diod. 30.18.2; Mittag 2006, 168–70.
- 76 Livy 44.19.6–8; Mittag 2006, 178; Mørkholm 1966, 85.
- 77 Mittag 2006, 178; Mørkholm 1966, 82–5.
- 78 Livy 44.19.13–14; Just. 34.2.8–3.1; Mittag 2006, 178–81.
- 79 Some of the best analysis of this type of coinage is: Lorber and Iossif 2009.
- 80 Porph. *FGrH* 260F 49a-b; Mittag 2006, 171–5 contra Mørkholm 1966, 82–3; Hölbl 2001, 14; Mooren 1979, 81–86.
- 81 Poly. 29.27; Diod. Sic. 31.2; Livy 45.12.3–6; Velleius 1.10.1; Val. Max. 6.4.3; App. Syr. 66; Cic. *Philippica* 8.23; Justin 34.3.1–4.
- 82 Diod. 31.16.1; Polyb. 30.25.1–26.9.
- 83 See chapter one for Seleukos I's connections to Zeus. See also Hadley 1974; Hoover 1996; Iossif 2004; Erickson 2012 for Seleukos I's use of Zeus in this manner.
- 84 Polyb. 27.19, 28.1; Diod. Sic. 30.15–16; Livy 42.29.7; Mittag 2006, 159.
- 85 Macc. 1.1.16; Jos. *Ant. Jud.* 12.242; Justin 34.2.7.
- 86 Mørkholm 1966, 68 no. 16.
- 87 Diod. 29.24.1.
- 88 See Mehl 1980; Austin 1986 for the importance of warfare to the Hellenistic kings.
- 89 Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008, 68.
- 90 Mørkholm 1963, 40.3:22–3.
- 91 Le Rider 1994, 1995.
- 92 Anokhin 2014.
- 93 Ogden 2011, 80–8.
- 94 Anokhin 2014.
- 95 Anokhin 2014.
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Conclusion

This book has argued that the maintenance of Seleukid power was derived from the successful creation of a Seleukid identity which was neither territorially delimited nor culturally exclusive but was rather grounded in conceptions of the Seleukid king's right to rule. Although it is not recoverable through the sources available to us, I believe that by examining the patterns in the iconography of coinage that we can identify the features which the kings used to justify their power. This justification was not only based on an individual king's personal charisma (although that is also evident, particularly on types with military themes) but was ultimately derived from Seleukos' conquests and descent from Apollo and was supplemented by the reiteration of divine support for the Seleukid monarch. This conception of Seleukid power was useful to the victorious kings until the Roman defeat must have generated internal questions on the nature of Seleukid power. Antiochos IV appears to have set out to rectify this by re-establishing the same concept but now based on both his own links to Zeus and Apollo but also the traditional familial ones.

Each chapter has argued that the Seleukid kings developed an ideology that was based on a concept of Seleukid familial power and their right to rule which was at the heart based on their continued military success which revealed divine support. This book attempts to illustrate how the Seleukid kings tried to institutionalise and utilise charismatic kingship into something more than just rule by the king but rather rule by charismatic dynasty and family. This ideology was not fully formed at the outset of the dynasty (as discussed in [chapter one](#)), but developed throughout the history of the empire, and changed at several key points: the reigns of Seleukos I, Antiochos I ([chapter two](#)), and Antiochos IV ([chapter four](#)) appear to be particularly significant. Most importantly the propaganda distributed to the army through their pay spoke not only in Greek narratives but also incorporated the languages and symbols of the native traditions across the empire. The new mythology of empire sought to justify rule first through changing Seleukos' status. First, he attempted to tie himself to Alexander's legacy, but this position evolved to a point where Seleukos I appears to have presented himself as a rival to Alexander's legacy. When faced with the most difficult period in imperial history, the transfer of power from one generation to the next, Antiochos I

shifted the focus to a new god, whom he and his family now claimed as the progenitor of the house.

Additionally, Antiochos I took the step of consistently placing his own portrait on coinage. While not necessarily a marker of divinity, combined with the Apollo-on-the-omphalos reverse it created a lasting image of Seleukid power: the king and his patron god. While he did establish a temple to his father,¹ Antiochos I did not make Seleukos I the primary obverse image (as Ptolemy II had done). Instead, the Seleukid kings, from Antiochos I onwards chose to promote both their own image alongside that of the dynasty. Seleukid silver coinage, which would have primarily been distributed in the first instance to the army, became fairly consistent within this module until the reign of Antiochos IV. During his reign, there once again appears to be shift in the representation of divine favour in different parts of the empire, Zeus in Koile Syria and Apollo in the eastern half of the empire. What is important to recognise is that during each transformation it was not only the representation of the king that shifted, but that at each juncture the Seleukid past was rewritten to accommodate the new reality in each region of the empire.

Although this book ends with Antiochos IV as he radically alters the iconographic landscape of Seleukid coinage, his reign was not the end of the empire. With the death of Antiochos IV, the empire entered a period of turmoil and civil war from which it would never recover. The first phase of this conflict arose between the descendants (real or claimed) of Antiochos IV and the descendants of Seleukos IV. The mostly Ptolemaic brides that married into the Seleukid family in this period held an increasing amount of power as they outlived their various husbands, with several taking the diadem for themselves.² This continues the trend which began already in the reign of Antiochos III when he married his daughter Laodike to his son Antiochos, and then the future Seleukos IV, and eventually to Antiochos IV.³ Her career was surpassed by Kleopatra Thea who married the successive Seleukid kings: Alexander Balas,⁴ Demetrios II,⁵ Antiochos VII Sidetes⁶ before murdering her son Seleukos V,⁷ ruling on her own,⁸ before finally being killed by her son Antiochos VIII Grypos,⁹ whom she had brought back to join her as co-ruler.

Perhaps because of her multiple marriages to competing sides of the family, the disputes between her children continued for another several generations until first Tigranes the Great was welcomed into Antioch and then Pompey grew tired of the Seleukids' in-fighting and ended the dynasty. Within this background of dynastic warfare, it is perhaps unsurprising that there was a significant increase in civic coinage accelerates within this final period, which marks a break from the royal control up until the reign of Antiochos IV. Interestingly, as the last period of Seleukid rule has been reassessed the assumption that this was symptomatic of the inability of the last of Seleukids

to control the mints has been questioned, and the more likely reasoning of the Seleukids accepting much needed support in exchange for relaxed control has been proposed.¹⁰

The dynastic dispute that dominated the end of Seleukid rule was also evident in the royal coinage that the various competing factions issued. While details of each king's iconography in this final period are beyond the scope of this book,¹¹ there is an important general pattern which demonstrates that coinage remained a powerful tool in developing dynastic legitimacy. The heirs of Antiochos IV – Antiochos V and Alexander Balas – issued the Zeus Nikephoros type from the reign of Antiochos IV.¹² On the other hand, the heirs of Seleukos IV – Demetrios II, Antiochos VI – employed the Apollo-on-the-omphalos reverse.¹³ Significantly, Demetrios I, the son of Seleukos IV, developed his own reverse type and departed completely from Seleukid tradition. He employed a Tyche reverse rather than either Zeus or Apollo.¹⁴ From this point on, it is clear the dynastic imagery that had served the family so well for seven generations was no longer the dominant symbol of Seleukid power.

Notes

1 See Erickson 2018 for a summary of view on Seleukid ruler cult.

2 Macurdy 1932, 93–101; Ogden 1999, 143–70.

3 Ogden 1999, 140. Although it is possible that it was not the same Laodike that married all three brothers, it is generally accepted on the basis of the continuation of her portrait: Mørkholm 1964; Le Rider 1986; Fleischer 1991, 41–3; Meyer 1992; Hoover 2002; Iossif and Lorber 2007; Ager and Hardiman 2016, 145–6.

4 Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 13.80–2; I *Maccabees* 10.51.

5 I *Maccabees* 11.8–12; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 13.4.6–8; Diod. 32.27.9c.

6 Justin 36.1.9; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 13.7.1–2.

7 John of Antioch *FHG* iv p. 561.

8 Justin 39.1.4–6.

9 Justin 39.2.7–8.

10 Mørkholm 1991, 6; Meadows 2001; Hoover 2004.

11 See Bellinger 1949; Wright 2012, 8–13 for a useful overview.

12 Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008, 128, 212.

13 Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008, 264–6, 316–7.

14 Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover 2008, 154–5.

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